



Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

9346th meeting

Wednesday, 14 June 2023, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Ms. Al Kaabi (United Arab Emirates)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil	Mr. De Almeida Filho
China	Mr. Zhang Jun
Ecuador	Mr. Pérez Loose
France	Mr. De Rivière
Gabon	Mr. Immongault
Ghana	Mr. Afriyie
Japan	Mrs. Shino
Malta	Mrs. Frazier
Mozambique	Ms. Comoane
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
Switzerland	Mr. Hauri
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

The values of human fraternity in promoting and sustaining peace

Letter dated 9 June 2023 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2023/417)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. *Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room AB-0601 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).



The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

The values of human fraternity in promoting and sustaining peace

Letter dated 9 June 2023 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2023/417)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, His Eminence Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, His Excellency Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, the distinguished ministers and other high-level representatives. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: His Eminence Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif and Chairman of the Muslim Council of Elders; His Excellency Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See; and Ms. Latifa Ibn Ziaten, Founder and President of Association IMAD pour la jeunesse et la paix.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2023/417, which contains the text of a letter dated 9 June 2023 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres.

The Secretary-General: I thank the Government of the United Arab Emirates for convening this important debate on the values of human fraternity in promoting and sustaining peace. It is an immense privilege to be joined today by His Eminence Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, and His Excellency Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher,

Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See. I also extend a warm welcome to Latifa Ibn Ziaten, who is providing a briefing on behalf of civil society.

Faith leaders are vital allies in our shared quest for global peace. My esteemed predecessor Dag Hammarskjöld once observed that "The United Nations stands outside — necessarily outside — all confessions, but it is, nevertheless, an instrument of faith. As such it is inspired by what unites and not by what divides the great religions of the world." Every great faith summons the imperatives of human fraternity, mutual respect and understanding. These universal values animate the United Nations Charter and are at the core of our work for peace, justice and human rights.

Preserving peace and preventing war is the *raison d'être* of the Council. Threats to peace come in many forms — from competition for power and resources, to human rights violations and weak governance, and to extreme poverty, inequalities and marginalization that breed hopelessness and despair. But an all-too-common denominator to the onset and escalation of conflict is hatred of the other. Hate fuels humankind's worst impulses. It is a catalyst for polarization and radicalization and a conduit for atrocity crimes. It is also a result of those crimes, contributing to horrific cycles of violence that can churn for decades. It greases the wheels of violence, frays the social fabric and corrodes the pillars of stability. It is, in short, often the bloody heart of conflict. And that heart is pumping venom and division throughout the bloodstream of the global body politic. Around the world, we are witnessing a groundswell of xenophobia, racism, intolerance, violent misogyny, anti-Muslim hatred, virulent antisemitism and attacks on minority Christian communities.

Neo-Nazi white supremacist movements today represent the top and the fastest growing internal security threat in several countries. The demonization of the other, disdain for diversity and disregard for human rights — those evils are not new to our time. What is new is their speed and reach. Social media has equipped hatemongers with a global bullhorn for bile. Today no conspiracy is too outrageous to find a vast audience, no falsehood too absurd to fuel an online frenzy. Unverified assertions, or outright lies, can gain instant credibility, placed on an equal footing with facts and science. They are often embraced, and even promoted, by political leaders. Hate-fuelled ideas and language are moving from the margins to the mainstream, coarsening the public discourse and triggering real-life

violence. The effects are everywhere, and they are deadly. The perpetrators of the heinous attacks on a mosque in Christchurch, a synagogue in Pittsburgh and a church in Charleston were all radicalized online.

The United Nations itself is not immune to that threat. Last year, a survey of United Nations peacekeepers found that 75 per cent see mis- and disinformation as a direct threat to their safety and security. From our Resident Coordinators to our envoys, mediators and peacekeepers — all have raised the alarm. And of course, many challenges on the agenda of the Council are directly affected by hate speech, supercharged by modern technologies. From Bosnia and Herzegovina to Libya and beyond, hate speech is exacerbating tensions among communities and eroding trust in institutions. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic, hate speech has been used to vilify minorities, and disinformation campaigns have smeared and threatened United Nations peacekeepers and humanitarian workers with lies. In Myanmar, social media has been exploited to demean and demonize the Rohingya minority, inciting attacks and violence. In Iraq, the recent proliferation of hate speech targeting Yazidis in Sinjar has stoked fears within the community that it will once again be the target of atrocity crimes. The list goes on, and it is growing.

Hate is a danger to everyone, and fighting it therefore must be a job for everyone. We must collectively strengthen our defences.

First, we must reign in the hate that is spreading online. Earlier this week, I launched a policy brief to promote information integrity on digital platforms. It proposes a code of conduct to help Member States, digital platforms and other stakeholders make the digital space more inclusive and safer for all, while defending the right to the freedom of opinion and expression and the right to access information. As part of *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), we are working on a global digital compact for an open, free, inclusive and secure digital future for all, firmly anchored in human rights and non-discrimination.

(spoke in French)

Secondly, as we move towards increasingly multi-ethnic and religiously diverse societies, we must also invest in social cohesion. We need to ensure that every community feels respected for its unique identity, while at the same time fully belonging to society as a whole. We must acknowledge diversity as an asset to

any society, not a threat. Hate is rooted in ignorance and fear. But, when we enrich the soil of knowledge with facts, science and historical truth, hatred cannot spread like a deadly weed. That requires guaranteeing quality education for everyone, everywhere, including women and girls. That requires supporting education systems that instil respect for science and celebrate humankind in all its diversity. And it requires increased funding for education, peacebuilding and global solidarity.

(spoke in English)

Finally and fundamentally, we must strengthen the values of compassion, respect and human fraternity and secure free and safe civic spaces. They are our best antidote to the poison of discord and division. That demands action by all of us across international organizations, Governments, civil society and the private sector. And it requires the intervention of faith leaders everywhere. The fact is that we see examples of intolerance in all societies and among all faiths today. It is the duty of religious leaders to prevent the instrumentalization of hatred among their followers. The declaration “Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together”, by His Holiness Pope Francis and His Eminence Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, is a model for compassion and human solidarity. It urges religious and political leaders to end wars, conflicts and environmental degradation. It calls on people of faith to recognize and respect one another, join hands and work together for the good of humankind.

At this time of strife, let us all take inspiration from the declaration and renew our commitment to stand together as one human family. Together, let us forge an alliance of peace, rooted in the values of human fraternity, rich in diversity, equal in dignity and rights and united in solidarity.

The President *(spoke in Arabic)*: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Eminence Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb.

Sheikh Al-Tayeb *(spoke in Arabic)*: I am addressing the Security Council from Egypt — the oasis of peace, the meeting point of religions, the cradle of civilization and history and the home to peace and security. It is with pleasure that I am speaking before Security Council members at the gracious invitation by the United Arab Emirates, which is an elected member and President

of the Security Council for this month. This Arab and Islamic nation is sparing no effort in promoting peace among peoples and strengthening the principles of human fraternity, tolerance and coexistence. I would like also to commend the wisdom in the statement I listened to by Secretary-General António Guterres and his clear belief in the importance of the role of religions and principles of human fraternity in achieving global peace.

At the outset, let me present myself as a humble Muslim man who does not belong to any political streams, regardless of their origins or affiliations, and who does not belong to any right-winged or left-winged ideologies. I am a fervent advocate for peace, which I actively pursue and desire for all people. I feel a deep sense of human fraternity that connects me to all human beings regardless of their ethnicity, religion, belief or language. I have learned that from the Islamic religion that I follow and from the divine books that God sent to His prophets and messengers, including the last of them, the Holy Qur'an, which was revealed to Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him.

All divine scriptures teach us that God has honoured humankind and favoured people over many of his other creatures, and that God has created differences among humankind in their languages, races, religions and beliefs. God teaches us that humankind will live with those differences until the end of time. The divine scriptures teach us that all attempts to align peoples behind one religion, culture or civilization are bound to fail because they are contrary to the will of the creator of all beings, who knows what is best and most beneficial for them.

God has given us information about himself in the Qur'an, saying that God has full power and control over his affairs, but most among humankind know it not. The law of differences among human beings is a cornerstone of the concept of divine creation for humankind and involves a set of rights and obligations that are defined in the Qur'an with great clarity. At the forefront is the right to freedom of belief and opinion, together with individual, familial and communal responsibilities and obligations. The Qur'an prohibits anything that violates those rights or undermines their sanctity, even going as far as to forbid any attempt to force believers to change their beliefs, religions or cultures. Those who read the Qur'an with objectivity can see that it clearly states such precepts as the absence of compulsion in religion — whoever desires to believe, let them believe,

and whoever does not, let them disbelieve. It is not for you to compel them. Whoever delves into the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad will encounter his clear message emphasizing freedom of belief. Those who choose to reject Islam, as Jews or Christians, will not be coerced to abandon their faith.

It is logical that relationships among individuals with different religions, languages, cultures and civilizations should be built on peace and security. The Qur'an expresses that relationship as one of encountering one another. God Almighty says in the Qur'an,

“We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other” (*The Holy Qur'an, XLIX:13*).

Under that Qur'anic theory of international relations there is no place for theories of conflict and confrontation, racial discrimination, white supremacy or dominance over the rest of God's creation. The only relationship that is deemed acceptable among people is rather one of peace, which is the core principle of Islam and the other divine religions that preceded it. Claims that Islam is a religion of the sword or of wars are therefore based neither on justice nor knowledge. If we look at history, we will find that war in Islam is an exceptional circumstance, a necessity for self-defence and the protection of land, honour and dignity. It is not correct that Islam is responsible for the phenomenon of terrorism. The correct assertion would be that the phenomenon of terrorism — for which Islam and other religions are not to blame — is driven primarily by global hegemonic policies, material philosophies and economic doctrines that disregard moral principles.

In my briefing today, my intention is not to enlighten members about Islam but to urge them to end the senseless wars that have erupted over recent decades and that are still flaring in our region and our countries today. I am speaking of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the tragedies, pain and sorrow they have wrought over the past 20 years. I am also speaking of Syria, Libya and Yemen and the destruction of their ancient civilizations, rooted for thousands of years in the records of history. Those lands have become battlegrounds for armed conflicts that have forced their men, women and children to flee from horrors of wars that have left them utterly powerless.

I am speaking of our and your sacred places in Palestine, and the immense suffering endured by the Palestinian people under the arrogance of power and the cruelty of tyranny. I lament the international community's silence in the face of the violation of that noble people's rights. However, I appreciated the United Nations' commemoration on 15 May of the seventy-fifth anniversary of Palestine's Nakba, reminding the world and the human conscience of the 75 years that have passed since the tragic mass displacement of Palestinians. From this platform, I urge the Security Council and the international community to expedite, without delay, the recognition of an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital, and to protect the sanctity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound from the ongoing violations it faces every day.

I am speaking of the ongoing war that is unfolding today on Europe's eastern borders, with the terror it instills, the fear it evokes and the concern that it may push humankind backwards into a primitive era. I urge the international community to immediately halt that catastrophe and protect the innocent from the bloodshed and the destruction of cities and villages.

I am speaking of the crisis of refugees fleeing the horrors of war and their right to be rescued and hosted — a right they are guaranteed by divine law and religion, regardless of their religious beliefs and even if they are not religious at all. I am speaking of the destruction of the family and the erasure of the right of children to delight in the embrace of the mothers who gave birth to them. I am speaking of the devastation of the environment, of pollution, of the surging tides of seas and the rampant fires that ravage our forests.

I have absolutely no doubt that the crises menacing humankind today, and which are prevalent in the East and insidiously tightening their grip in the West, could have been entirely avoided if our civilization and culture had not excessively repudiated religion and casually tossed aside religious teachings, and if we had learned from divine guidance about the sanctity of life and the value of justice and its pivotal role in individual and societal stability.

In the face of those crises and as believers in God, we are compelled to continue advocating a message of peace and love among people to the best of our ability. We should remain resolute in opposing the discourse of hate that has spread among people, the manipulations of religions and doctrines that

have ignited wars among nations and the instilling of fear and terror in people's hearts. That is the mission pursued by Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, in partnership with the Catholic Church, other Western and Eastern churches and other religious institutions, in our collective effort to revive a culture of dialogue among the followers of religions and consolidate the principles of peace and harmonious coexistence.

On 4 February 2019 from Abu Dhabi, together with our dear brother Pope Francis — may God grant him health and wellness — we presented to the world the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together. We have repeatedly emphasized the importance of asserting the principles of human fraternity as the foundation of international peace and security at various global events, such as the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in Kazakhstan, the Bahrain Forum for Dialogue: East and West for Human Coexistence and other conferences held in Africa, Asia and Europe. Moreover, Al-Azhar Al-Sharif is working in cooperation with the Muslim Council of Elders, the Catholic Church, the Church of England and other diverse religious institutions to organize a gathering of religious leaders to consult on those crises and identify shared responsibilities in addressing them, especially in relation to climate change and the escalating pace of wars and conflicts. I trust that the Council will agree that those efforts require the support of political leaders and decision-makers in the international community if we are to actually achieve the shared goal we desire — that is, actual international peace and security on the ground and in people's lives — rather than being left with mere decisions and recommendations that go unheeded or disregarded.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate that our gathering here today is not a luxury but a necessity, dictated by concern for the future of humankind. We are seeking a solution to its complex crisis, which has begun to expand and penetrate, presaging severe consequences if it is allowed to continue along its disastrous path. The choice made by the presidency of the Security Council to address human fraternity is indeed commendable, and I believe that there is no better way to address our current crises than by embracing human fraternity, which can be likened to our lost paradise.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank His Eminence Grand Imam Al-Tayeb for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Archbishop Gallagher.

Archbishop Gallagher: I have the honour to read an address by His Holiness Pope Francis to the Security Council.

“I thank the Council for this kind invitation to address it, which I willingly accepted because we are living at a crucial moment for humankind in which peace seems to be giving way to war. Conflicts are growing and stability is increasingly at risk. We are experiencing a third world war fought piecemeal that as time passes seems to become ever more widespread.

“The Council, whose mandate is to safeguard the world’s peace and security, has at times seemed in people’s eyes to be powerless and paralysed. Yet its work, much appreciated by the Holy See, is essential to promoting peace. For that very reason, I want to offer the Council a heartfelt invitation to tackle our common problems, setting aside ideologies, narrow visions, partisan ideas and interests, and to cultivate a single purpose — to work for the good of all humankind. The Council is of course expected to respect and apply the Charter of the United Nations with transparency and sincerity, and without ulterior motives, as an obligatory reference point of justice and not as a means of masking spurious intentions.

“Today’s globalized world has brought all of us closer together, yet it has not made us any more fraternal. Indeed, we are suffering from a famine of fraternity arising from the many situations of injustice, poverty and inequality around the world, as well as from the lack of a culture of solidarity. New ideologies, characterized by widespread individualism, egocentrism and materialistic consumerism, weaken social bonds, fuelling a throwaway mentality that leads to contempt for the weakest and those considered useless and to their abandonment. In that way, human coexistence increasingly tends to resemble a mere *do ut des* that is both pragmatic and selfish. Yet the worst effect of this famine of fraternity is armed conflict and war, which make enemies not just of individuals but entire peoples, and whose negative consequences reverberate for generations.

“With the founding of the United Nations, it seemed that after two terrible world wars the world had learned to move towards a more stable peace, and to become at last a family of nations. Today,

though, we seem to be going backwards in history, with the rise of myopic, extremist, resentful and aggressive nationalisms that have kindled conflicts that are not only anachronistic and outdated but even more violent than those of the past.

“As a man of faith, I believe that peace is God’s dream for humankind. Yet sadly, I note that because of war, that wonderful dream is changing into a nightmare. To be sure, from an economic point of view war is often more enticing than peace, inasmuch as it promotes profit. But that is always for a few and at the expense of the well-being of entire populations. The money earned from arms sales is therefore soiled with innocent blood. It takes more courage to renounce easy profits for the sake of keeping peace than to sell ever more sophisticated and powerful weapons. It takes more courage to seek peace than to wage war. It takes more courage to promote encounters rather than confrontations, and to sit at the negotiating table rather than continue hostilities.

“In order to make peace a reality, we must move away from the logic of the legitimacy of war. If that was more valid in earlier times when wars were more limited in scope, in our day, with nuclear weapons and others of mass destruction, the battlefield has become practically unlimited and the effects potentially catastrophic. The time has come to say an emphatic no to war and to state that wars are not just. Only peace is just — stable, lasting peace, built not on the precarious balance of deterrence but on the fraternity that unites us. We are indeed all brothers and sisters, journeying on the same Earth, dwelling in a single common home. We cannot darken the heaven under which we live with the clouds of nationalisms. Where will we end up if we all think only of ourselves?

“Those who strive to build peace must promote fraternity. Building peace is a craft that requires passion and patience, experience and farsightedness, tenacity and dedication and dialogue and diplomacy. They must listen, too, to the cries of those who are suffering because of wars, especially children. Their tear-stained eyes judge us. The future we prepare for them will be the court of our present choices.

“Peace is possible if it is truly desired. Peace should find in the Security Council its fundamental

characteristics, which a wrong idea of peace easily makes us forget. Peace must be based on reason, not passion. It must be magnanimous, not selfish. Peace must not be inert and passive but dynamic, active and progressive, according as the just demands of the declared and equitable rights of humankind require new and better expressions of peace. Peace must not be weak, inefficient or servile, but strong in the moral reasons that justify it and in the solid support of the nations that must uphold it.

“There is still time to write a new chapter of peace in history. We can do so in such a way that war will belong to the past, not to the future. The discussions in the Security Council are aimed at and serve that end. I want to emphasize again a word that I like to repeat, for I consider it decisive — fraternity. Fraternity cannot remain an abstract idea but must become a real point of departure. Indeed, it is an essential dimension of humankind, because we are relational beings. A living awareness of that relationality leads us to see and treat each person as a true sister or brother. Without that, it becomes impossible to build a just society or a solid and lasting peace.

“I assure the Council of my support, my prayers and the prayers of all the faithful of the Catholic Church on behalf of peace and every peace process and initiative. I wholeheartedly wish that not only the Security Council but the entire United Nations Organization, its Member States and each of its officials may always render effective service to humankind, taking responsibility for preserving not only their own future but that of all, with the boldness to increase now, without fear, what is needed to promote fraternity and peace for the entire planet.

“Blessed are the peacemakers.”

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Archbishop Gallagher for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Ibn Ziaten.

Ms. Ibn Ziaten (*spoke in French*): I am truly honoured to participate today in this open debate. I am very moved to speak before the Security Council; the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres; His Eminence Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif; and His Excellency

Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See.

I would like to introduce myself as a woman and a mother. I was hit hard by terrorism. My son was killed on 11 March 2012. I did not want to drown in my suffering. I wanted to know who the person who killed my son was and why. I took steps myself to find out who that young person was. When I retraced that young person’s journey, I realized that he had no education, no love and no one to support him.

I therefore wondered how it was possible for young people today to fall into the trap of terrorism, and how it happened. As a woman who has been on the ground for 11 years, I realized that education was important. Without fathers or mothers to guide them, without schools or society, all those young people are experiencing a crisis today. I can see that because I am on the ground three times a week. I support France and the world, and I see what is happening. I am not an expert, but I have a great deal of experience today.

Those young people are completely in the dark. They are suffering and are a bit lost. However, every child is born to be happy and have a place in society. But if we do not give them that chance, the situation becomes complicated. That is what happened with the person who killed my child. I see it today in detention centres, in homes and in neighbourhoods where young people who have dropped out of school and are on their own and experiencing tremendous difficulties. I am very sad to see what is happening today and what has brought us to this point.

That is why peace is so important. If we all work together and with support, then perhaps peace will overcome hatred, because hatred is easier, but peace is something we have to work towards. That is something that I have been observing when I work with young people on tolerance, coexistence and love. I see their strength to carry on and move towards what they themselves want and dream of. However, it is a joint effort. It is the work of families, schools, society and the State.

Today some parents have, unfortunately, given up on education. If the parents are not present, it is difficult for schools to support those children. When children are left to their own devices, they arrive at middle school, and we say, “Those children have not succeeded. What should do with them? We will send them to vocational schools.” We send them to vocational schools without

them knowing how to read or to write fluently. They are given a chance: either they work, or they can leave. Those children stay for six months, and we turn them into a ticking time bomb for society. That is what I have seen with young people. They are lost.

As for the parents, I do not judge them. It is not easy to be a parent today. It is very difficult. We also have to work with parents on education and respect for values, and we have to pay attention to our children. If we pay attention to and support our children and give them affection and love, if we are present, if we share a meal with them once a day, if we talk to them and understand what is happening with them, then perhaps we may be able to save today's young people. But it is a joint effort among schools, parents and society. It is very important.

Today I ask every young person I speak with at school, "Is there any hope here?" Many young people tell me, "No, ma'am, we do not have hope." I ask them, "Do you dream?" They say, "No, we do not dream." It worries me that a 14-year-old child has no dreams or hope. So I ask them, "Why?" And they say, "We do not have opportunities." And so I say to them, "Young men, if you really have the opportunity and the desire to do this, then you must start your engine. If you start your engine, I am sure you will achieve your dream. But if you do not start your engine, you will not make it. Look at this mother in front of you. This is a mother and a woman who has been torn apart by the death of her 30-year-old son while he was serving the Republic. I did not want to drown in my suffering. I wanted to keep standing. Just as my son refused to get down on his knees, I am standing up for you. So, try to make an effort, because if you do not start your engines, nobody will start them for you. So, have faith in yourselves, believe in yourselves, move forward and do not give up."

As long as I am healthy, I will continue to work for peace, humankind, coexistence and tolerance, because if we do not work together, we will not succeed.

This woman in front of the Council members is just a mother of five, a woman on the ground. But today I can tell Council members that I have seen millions upon millions of young people. I have prevented quite a few people from going to Syria. I am working on the problem of terrorism. It concerns me enormously. I go to detention facilities and closed homes. I have prevented young people from leaving. I work with young people who have returned from Syria. I work with mothers

who have returned from Syria. So, I think we really need to talk to each other and find solutions together.

I need the Security Council's help. I will not give up. I will continue my fight to the very end.

I started my engine when I was nine years old, and it is still running. I want to start every engine on Earth so that we can all live in peace, fraternity and love. The world is beautiful, and we must make it more beautiful for others.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Ms. Ibn Ziaten for her briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister of State of the United Arab Emirates.

I would like first to thank Secretary-General António Guterres and His Eminence Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif and Chairman of the Muslim Council of Elders, for their valuable statements. I also thank Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See, for the statement he delivered on behalf of His Holiness Pope Francis, Head of the Catholic Church, whom we wish a speedy recovery. Additionally, I thank Ms. Latifa Ibn Ziaten for her statement in which she highlighted the role of young people in combating extremism.

We are meeting today to discuss an issue that has a significant impact on international peace and security. Our world is suffering from the highest number of armed conflicts since the Second World War, with more than 2 billion people living in places affected by the scourge of conflicts.

That reality has grown increasingly dangerous and complex, especially amid the continued rise in levels of division, hate speech, racism and extremism in all their forms and manifestations. Extremism has become a means for deepening differences, inciting violence and fuelling conflicts. As a result, places of worship have become targets, and the killing and persecution of people — whether on the basis of identity, race or religion — have become unjustifiably legitimized and commonplace. Hate speech and extremism against women and girls in particular further entrench inequality and create obstacles for their participation in public life.

We have learned tough lessons from history, which is recognized in the resolutions of the Security Council,

in which conflicts stemming from extremism have led to the loss of lives, the destruction of communities and the erasure of our human history. In its worst forms, hate speech can incite acts that may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, as witnessed in the events that occurred in former Yugoslavia and in the genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda. In addition to causing and perpetuating conflicts, hate speech, racism and all forms of extremism can hamper post-conflict reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts even after arms have been laid down, as in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The exploitation of advanced technology that transcends national borders has facilitated the spread of hate speech, misinformation and disinformation among societies worldwide. No country or region is safe from those growing threats. The Security Council must acknowledge that addressing and preventing hate speech, racism and all forms of extremism in conflict situations is an integral part of its mandate to maintain international peace and security. This is in line with our obligations set forth in the United Nations Charter, namely, to save future generations from the scourge of war, to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another.

We cannot overlook the obvious challenges posed by hate speech and extremism in many of the items on the Security Council's agenda. Although the Council has addressed those challenges in certain conflict situations, it has become clear that addressing those issues effectively requires the Council to adopt a proactive and comprehensive approach that would cover all stages of conflict, from the prevention and resolution of conflicts to efforts aimed at building and sustaining peace. The United Arab Emirates therefore convened today's meeting to urgently reiterate our joint commitments to promoting peace, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, as they provide the basis for achieving sustainable peace and realizing peaceful and prosperous societies.

The threats posed by extremism, racism and hate speech in cases of conflict require the participation of all relevant stakeholders in developing and implementing a diverse set of solutions that span several policy areas. For example, Governments, civil society and the private sector have important roles to play in building bridges, developing policies and creating solutions to address those threats. Their approaches must include the full, equal and meaningful participation of women as key

stakeholders who can drive sustainable action towards the achievement of reconciliation and peace.

To complement our efforts towards promoting societal resilience and achieving peace, religious and community leaders also have an important role to play. Through their engagement with local communities, they can raise awareness on the importance of promoting tolerance and peaceful coexistence, and on strengthening intercultural and interreligious dialogue. We commend the valuable contributions made by the Grand Imam and His Holiness Pope Francis in promoting the values of human fraternity and coexistence and in correcting misconceptions.

As for education, this essential prevention tool equips youth and future generations with the knowledge and skills needed to refute extremist ideology and play a positive role in building their societies and promoting peace.

We can benefit from the critical work made by the United Nations system to address hate speech, racism and intolerance, including the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, which is a testament of the Organization's efforts in the areas of conflict prevention and sustained peace. Accordingly, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom have submitted a draft resolution to the Security Council that seeks to address the threats of hate speech, racism and all forms of extremism in conflict situations and to promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence in a proactive and cross-cutting manner (S/2023/427).

Our approach and initiatives are based on the difficult experience of our Arab region, including the spread of hate speech and its role in inciting, exacerbating and prolonging conflicts. Against this reality, the United Arab Emirates has managed to welcome more than 200 nationalities to live in peace and harmony within its borders through strengthening the values of tolerance, peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding. We will continue to work by all possible means — at local, regional and international levels — to encourage a culture of peace and refute extremist discourse.

In conclusion, today's meeting represents a critical step towards strengthening prevention as a fundamental pillar in our international efforts aimed at maintaining peace and security. Yet a great deal remains to be done in this direction. We must ensure that we respond to threats before it is too late by following proactive and

pragmatic approaches. That is the vision of the United Arab Emirates. Our goal is to save generations from conflicts and enable them to actively participate in building a better, more secure and stable future.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Gabon.

Mr. Immongault (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I congratulate the United Arab Emirates for initiating this important public debate and thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres, for defining its scope. I also thank the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, His Eminence Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher and Ms. Latifa Ibn Ziaten for their inspiring briefings.

More than four years have passed since the signing of the historic Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, on 4 February 2019, in Abu Dhabi, by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, His Eminence Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb. Beyond the religious significance of this document for relations between Christianity and Islam, it is a truly solemn appeal to put an end to wars, condemn terrorism and violent extremism, and engage in ongoing dialogue in a sincere and frank manner.

The concept of human brotherhood understands humanity as a constellation of individuals belonging to the same family, naturally bound together by bonds of solidarity and animated by a sense of belonging to a community of destiny that makes their security and prosperity indivisible. It is certainly this perception that led Pope Francis to say, on 4 February 2021:

“Fraternity is the new frontier of humanity ... We are siblings, or we destroy each other”.

By proclaiming, on 21 December 2020, 4 February the International Day of Human Fraternity, the General Assembly responded to the need for action based on unity, solidarity and multilateral cooperation in the face of

“acts that advocate religious hatred and thereby undermine the spirit of tolerance and respect for diversity” (*General Assembly resolution 75/200, fifth preambular paragraph*).

As Gabon supports the text submitted by the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom (S/2023/427), my country sees in it a commitment to promoting the values on which the United Nations is founded, notably tolerance, mutual understanding and respect for diversity and human rights — all human rights.

At a time when the world is more than ever in the grip of multiple crises, including solidarity, security, humanitarian and health crises, our help lies in this transcendent value of fraternity, solidarity and friendship, which leads us to share our understanding of the problems of the contemporary world — notably the response to the scientific and technological divide to the immense social inequality gap to the peaceful settlement of disputes to the fight against climate change, terrorism and extremism.

It is through greater fraternity and solidarity among the peoples of the world that we can emerge from the chronic cycles of crisis in which several regions of the world are mired. And it is through tolerance, pluralism, mutual respect and the diversity of convictions that we will make human brotherhood flourish.

Beyond our racial, religious or community differences, beyond our opinions and lifestyles, we all aspire to peace, security, dignity, freedom and respect as individuals and as members of the international community. Humankind is fraternal when it engages in dialogue, which brings peoples and civilizations closer together. Dialogue unites nations and spreads human identities. Dialogue inspires understanding, which, in turn, inspires tolerance. That virtuous chain leads to peace and fraternity. To abandon the path of dialogue is to open the door to the unknown, to confrontation, to mistrust and to identity-based isolationism.

That is why, wherever security is disrupted or threatened, we must, more than ever, come together and engage in dialogue. We must engage in dialogue wherever guns are blazing. We must engage in dialogue wherever suffering is unbearable. We must engage in dialogue wherever exclusion has imprisoned fragments of humanity in the shackles and barbed wire of indignity and enslavement.

I would like to conclude by emphasizing that it is crucial for all of us to condemn all practices and attitudes that threaten life, both in their manifestations and in their root causes. In that regard, I echo the words of Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, addressed to their adherents, in the

Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together:

“The first and most important aim ... is to believe in God, to honour Him and to invite all men and women to believe that this universe depends on a God who governs it. He is the Creator who has formed us with His divine wisdom and has granted us the gift of life to protect it. It is a gift that no one has the right to take away, threaten or manipulate to suit oneself. Indeed, everyone must safeguard this gift of life from its beginning up to its natural end.”

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on the Minister of State Administration and Public Service of Mozambique.

Ms. Comoane (Mozambique) (*spoke in Portuguese; English interpretation provided by delegation*): Mozambique warmly welcomes the initiative by the United Arab Emirates of convening this high-level briefing under the item “Maintenance of international peace and security” and the theme, “The values of human fraternity in promoting and sustaining peace”. It is undoubtedly a relevant and timely topic at a time when maintaining peace and security in the world is a global challenge that demands from humankind a culture of coexistence, fraternity and harmony.

We also thank His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres; His Eminence Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif and Chairman of the Muslim Council of Elders; His Excellency Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See; and Ms. Latifa Ibn Ziaten, Founder and President of Association IMAD for Youth and Peace, for their briefings to the Council on this important topic.

The rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion are duly enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The universality of the values of human fraternity are well stated in the Charter, where the peoples of the United Nations undertake to practice tolerance and live together in peace. Such values are stated in the sense that all States are committed to the promotion of universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. In order to promote and sustain peace, we must, therefore, reflect those universal values as pillars in our governance policies, in our cultures

and traditions, in our religions, in a single expression in our *modus vivendi* and our *modus operandi*.

We are deeply concerned about the direction the world is taking today with regard to intolerance, hate speech and incitement to hatred, racism and other manifestations of extremism, which lead to an atmosphere of mistrust and fear that, in turn, degenerate into conflicts, disputes and wars. We defend the principle that places of worship such as churches, mosques and synagogues should not be used as incubators for religious extremists or as battlefields. They must, instead, be used as sanctuaries of peace and human fraternity, which are noble aspirations of peoples and nations.

We think that dialogue plays a key role in reversing that dangerous trend. That role that must not be underestimated, considering that in the history of humankind dialogue has always been a significant stage towards peace. Mozambique advocates the principle that the only alternative to peace is peace itself.

We have to promote the culture of tolerance and living together in peace. We believe that tolerance, pluralistic tradition, mutual respect and diversity of religions and beliefs can promote human fraternity. In that regard, we welcome any initiatives at the international, regional, national or local level aimed at promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue. Such initiatives are welcome, whether promoted by States or Governments, civil society organizations, religious institutions or even the private sector.

That is why we positively highlight the meeting between Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, on 4 February 2019, in Abu Dhabi, which resulted in the signing of the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together. We consider this initiative to be an important contribution of religious leaders in the promotion of human fraternity, tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

Drawing from our own history, we praise the mediation role played by the Vatican, which culminated with the signing, in 1992, of the General Peace Agreement for Mozambique, between the Government of Mozambique and the Resistência Nacional Moçambicana, putting an end to the civil war in our country. That agreement was reinforced in 2019 by the Maputo Accord for Peace and National Reconciliation and, more recently, by the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, which is

expected to conclude this month and to culminate in a peace accord and national reconciliation.

We also recognize the critical importance of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 1999 (see A/53/PV.107), and its contribution to our common efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination and intolerance, including those based on race, colour, sex, language, nationality, religion, political opinion, ethnic origin or other status.

In the same vein, we commend the launch by the then Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in July 2005, of the Alliance of Civilizations, a milestone initiative aimed at bridging the divide between societies exploited by religious extremists through the promotion of dialogue and international cooperation.

On the other hand, peacebuilding mechanisms also have a role to play in addressing intolerance, hate speech, racism and other manifestations of extremism. In order to build more peaceful and tolerant societies, the participation of communities and societies as a whole is of paramount importance. Local communities must be involved as active players in the promotion of dialogue, tolerance, peaceful coexistence, inclusion and human fraternity within and among societies.

Before I conclude, and on the subject under discussion, we wish to indicate that Mozambique has a clear vision and experience in addressing intolerance and promoting coexistence in peace and human fraternity, inspired by the fundamental law of our country. As per the Mozambican Constitution, one of the objectives of the Republic of Mozambique is “the promotion of a society of pluralism, tolerance and a culture of peace”. Guided by that objective, in Mozambique, and in line with United Nations frameworks and initiatives, we have been promoting the culture of peace and tolerance by advancing the unity in diversity agenda throughout the country.

In that regard, I would like to conclude by reiterating that in order to promote and sustain peace, the values of human fraternity must respect the beliefs and aspirations of people from different ethnic groups, cultural backgrounds and social and economic conditions, as that is the culture of peace that we desire.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I call on the Minister of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation of Ghana.

Mr. Afriyie (Ghana): I thank the United Arab Emirates for organizing today’s open debate, which contributes to our collective efforts to promote and sustain global peace. We thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his briefing. We are also grateful to His Eminence Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif and Chairman of the Muslim Council of Elders; His Excellency Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See; and Ms. Latifa Ibn Ziaten, Founder and President of Association IMAD pour la jeunesse et la paix for their insightful perspectives.

Celebrating human fraternity and the ideals it upholds reminds us of the shared principles that bind all of humankind together. Undeniably, some of humankind’s greatest advancements may not have been possible without intense peaceful cultural cooperation. Even to date, diversity in perspectives, cultures, beliefs and ways of life remains the driving force in human advancement. For that reason, we commend the United Arab Emirates and its partners for putting the values of compassion, religious understanding, tolerance and mutual respect high on the agenda of the United Nations. That is particularly important in a context in which many people of different faiths and cultures now coexist. The proclamation of International Day of Human Fraternity and World Interfaith Harmony Week by General Assembly resolutions 75/200 of 2020 and 65/5 of 2010, respectively, reminds us of our common humanity and the need to live together in peace and harmony, irrespective of our differences. We must therefore embrace our differences and diversity and eschew tendencies that drive a wedge between us and our cultures, resulting in mistrust and violence.

Unfortunately, in recent times, an upsurge in hate speech and incitement to hatred, intolerance, racism and violent extremism is posing a threat to peaceful coexistence among people of different faiths, cultures and, in some cases, those of different political persuasions. According to our compatriot and former Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, conflicts between countries have, thankfully, become less common. But conflicts and tensions within societies and between cultures have become more prominent. Regrettably, that is fuelled largely by social media, which provides a much wider audience for disseminating such bigotry. We remain concerned about the potential radicalizing effects of easily accessible online violent extremist content and its resultant resonance with segments of

young people. As we condemn the exploitation of such mass communication media for bigotry, we call on social media platforms to do more to rid their platforms of violent extremist content.

In Africa and elsewhere, we have witnessed the devastating consequences of hate speech pitting people of different religions or cultures that had hitherto lived in peace and harmony against one another. Vitriolic statements intended to offend others and incite hatred and discrimination based on race, nationality, religious identity, gender or other group membership are used to inflame tensions between different peoples and cultures. We wholeheartedly agree with the United Nations recognition, in the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, of such hateful utterances as a precursor to atrocity crimes, including genocide.

Similarly, on the back of the Security Council's insightful debate on the need for strategic communications to ensure effective peacekeeping (see S/PV.9090), let me underscore the importance of identifying and defeating the threat that the toxic mix of misinformation, disinformation and fake news poses to our collective peace and security. Nowhere is that threat more potent than in the Sahel, where the latter are being deployed by malign forces to facilitate terrorism and violent extremism, including through recruitment and radicalization.

In reaffirming Ghana's commitment to the protection of the legitimate exercise of freedom of expression, it is important to hold to account those who disregard sacred symbols and practices or speech that offends religious sensibilities or display intolerance in order to preserve societal peace and security. It is no secret that such conduct has been known to provoke or incite violence.

At this juncture, let me speak about what we have done in Ghana to promote human fraternity, which has given rise to peaceful coexistence among people of different ethnicities and faiths and made our country a model of interfaith tolerance and cooperation in Africa. In Ghana, different ethnic groups — Christians, Muslims and adherents of African traditional religions — have lived in comparative peace and harmony since our nation's founding. That journey begins at the basic level of education, whereby the curricula expose school children to the cultures of the more than 40 ethnic groups in Ghana and the teachings of religions by inculcating in them the spirit of tolerance, non-discrimination

and peaceful coexistence. Similar to the Abrahamic Family House in the United Arab Emirates, which houses a mosque, a church and a synagogue, in Ghana, it is not uncommon to find a mosque within striking distance of a church or a shrine. Even with this feat, our National Peace Council continues to develop and enhance national mechanisms for conflict prevention and sustainable peacebuilding. The National Peace Council, established by an act of Parliament in 2011 as an interfaith and multi-ethnic body, has in place a robust conflict early-warning system across the 16 regions of Ghana, which works to prevent conflict and adjudicate on tensions between ethnic and religious groups.

In conclusion, maintaining global peace and security in today's interconnected and interdependent world requires regard for international norms, dialogue, mutual respect, tolerance and understanding among communities and countries. Instead of revolting against globalization by advocating isolationism, nationalism and protectionism, we must embrace it and work to address its associated challenges. Minorities, people of different colours and faiths, migrants and refugees deserve to be treated with empathy and compassion for the sake of our common humanity.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): I want to thank today's briefers, His Eminence Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, His Excellency Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher and Ms. Latifa Ibn Ziaten. I would also like to thank you, Madam Minister, for convening this meeting to further the protection of universal human rights, religious coexistence and tolerance and to counter religious intolerance and hatred.

It is important for the Security Council to have conversations on human rights protections in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is necessary for us to speak with one another in open dialogue to promote tolerance, inclusion and understanding. And upholding universal human rights must be the very foundation of our efforts. Our work is hard. We live in a multicultural and pluralistic world. We have to work together to advance our shared humanity and the human dignity of all people. We have seen time and again that disregard for those common principles and a breakdown in tolerance give way to violence. Our challenge here in this Chamber — to prevent violence and foster peace — must be done in a way that encourages dialogue and upholds human rights for all. But we cannot allow abuse of human rights or repression of political opposition under the

pretext of countering terrorism or preventing violent extremism. Peace and security are strengthened by upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms, not by suppressing those rights and freedoms. As the Security Council has long reaffirmed, every individual has the right to have a religion, change one's religion or have no religion at all and to manifest one's religion or belief publicly or privately.

The Security Council has been equally clear that women's human rights and fundamental freedoms, including taking part in the conduct of public affairs, must be protected. It is well established that women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes as leaders, negotiators, peacekeepers and peacebuilders increases the likelihood of a just and lasting peace. Like members of other marginalized communities, LGBTIQ+ persons also face discrimination, threats to their lives and livelihoods and violence for just being themselves. The persistent criminalization of LGBTIQ+ status or conduct and their enduring violence and discrimination further undermine the ability of LGBTIQ+ persons to participate fully and safely as their authentic selves in societies in every region of the world. If we want to live in a more peaceful world, we must stand up for and protect the essential role of civil society, including activists, journalists and opposition politicians who are critical of our Governments and do not always agree with our policies. Peaceful political dissent is equally vital to averting conflict, and States must not misconstrue citizens exercising their freedom of expression or engaging in civic discourse to justify repression or State-approved acts of violence.

As President Biden said on the International Day of Human Fraternity in 2022, human fraternity can build "a better world that upholds universal human rights, lifts every human being and advances peace and security for all." Under no circumstances will the United States support misinterpretations of this concept to justify the repression of human rights defenders, women, girls or LGBTIQ+ persons, or any violations or abuses of human rights.

Mr. Pérez Loose (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am grateful for the information provided by the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres; the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, Sheikh Ahmad Muhammad Al-Tayeb; Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher; and Ms. Latifa Ibn Ziaten, Founder of Association IMAD pour la jeunesse et la paix.

My delegation agrees with Secretary-General Guterres in his affirmation that peaceful coexistence and inclusive development are threatened by the persistence of conflicts, the unprecedented number of displaced persons, the devastation caused by natural disasters, impunity and the resurgence of hate speech, among other factors. The universal premise of achieving a sustainable culture of peace and non-violence seems increasingly distant in the face of new threats that exacerbate the causes of conflicts and are manifested in intolerance, discrimination and disinformation. Focusing on the root causes of conflicts, the adoption of timely measures to prevent them, funding operations on the ground and the effective work of the special envoys and their teams are key to sustaining the peacebuilding agenda.

In that context, my delegation would like to reflect on three concepts, which, when they have been applied in specific historical situations, have contributed to the restoration and maintenance of international peace and security.

First, I would like to mention the potential of preventive diplomacy for creating early-warning systems that, through exercising their sovereignty and with the support of the international community, enable States to deploy all necessary diplomatic measures to avoid the escalation of violence and rein in the impact of conflicts, with a view to exposing innocent civilians to the least harm possible. We note with concern how some conflicts are exacerbated by the dissemination of narratives that incite hatred and intolerance against States, against communities made up of different ethnic, religious, cultural or belief groups and even against United Nations personnel. We reject that practice, which runs contrary to international norms.

As one of the proponents of the so-called linguistic turn in modern philosophy — I am referring to English thinker John Austin — pointed out, the ultimate purpose of language is not to merely depict reality. Narratives build realities and make us responsible for their consequences. Through words, lives and identities have been destroyed, roads to serfdom have been paved and prisons of terror have been built. The use of discourse and propaganda to incite hatred proved its destructive capacity in the years leading up to the Second World War, and it is therefore imperative to banish that once and for all. It is no coincidence that the dictatorships and autocracies of the twenty-first century are based on the suppression of discursive pluralism and the

one-dimensional accumulation of nationalist and paranoid narratives.

Secondly, we believe it is important to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations, regional organizations and States in order to establish normative frameworks and institutions that enable accountability and ensure that those who violate human rights and international humanitarian law are investigated and prosecuted in transparent processes, with a focus on reparations for the victims. There can be no peace without justice. We believe that is an essential step towards re-establishing democratic values, national reconciliation and lasting and definitive peace.

Thirdly, it is essential to invest in education for solidarity and tolerance, as well as to explore tools that strengthen young people's awareness in the face of radicalization and violent extremism. We know that is a far-reaching challenge and that meeting it is more difficult in some States than in others, but it is a universal ethical imperative.

Hate speech cannot be countered through criminal law or laws that muzzle the press, persecute journalists or impose censorship. Hate speech is countered with reasoning, education and science. A society that restricts its population's access and right to education has no chance of overcoming conflict and achieving peace. Ecuador therefore reiterates its rejection of the institutionalized gender-based discrimination used by the Taliban and other regimes, which is contrary to the provisions established by the Security Council in resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions.

In the face of new threats to international peace and security, I would like to conclude by recognizing that the implementation of the Strategy for the Digital Transformation of United Nations Peacekeeping is an opportunity to explore new ways to counter disinformation and the spread of hate through digital technologies. We agree with Secretary-General Guterres when he says that peaceful coexistence and inclusive development are threatened by a number of factors that must be addressed with new creative, innovative and coordinated strategies, with the ultimate goal of building peaceful and inclusive societies.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Archbishop Gallagher and Ms. Ibn Ziaten for their briefings.

Fraternity and tolerance are essential values that we all share. But we should also remember, on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that there is a normative framework and international obligations, as defined by treaties. Fraternity is of particular importance to France. It is part of our Republic's motto, alongside — and this is very important — liberty and equality. For the one cannot exist without the other two, and together they form the bedrock of our republican values. In that respect, I commend the work of the Association IMAD pour la Jeunesse et la Paix, founded by Ms. Ibn Ziaten, in promoting those values and preventing radicalization.

We should not be selective. How can we speak of tolerance if we suggest that only certain people are worthy of tolerance and others are not? Respect for international law, and especially for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, is the *sine qua non* of lasting peace and therefore has a rightful place in the Security Council. The rights of women, children and persons belonging to minorities in all their diversity, as well as of all individuals under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, must be fully respected. All forms of discrimination and incitement to violence must be condemned. And I mean all. All people, in all their diversity, must be able to benefit from the same protection. For that reason, France, which embodies feminist diplomacy and the defence of human rights, calls on all Member States to sign, ratify and uphold all international conventions guaranteeing all forms of human rights, without exception. Tolerance and fraternity are not enough. Yazidis, the Rohingya, women in Afghanistan and LGBTIQ+ persons are simply asking for their rights to be respected. Violations of human rights and international humanitarian law harm civilian populations and fuel conflict. Impunity breeds violence.

Respect for human rights is the essential foundation on which dialogue must be built. Recognition of the exercise of freedom of religion and belief, in all its dimensions, including the right to change one's religion and the right not to have one, is an essential component. Dialogue also requires the ability to hear divergent opinions and criticism. Acknowledging the right to express oneself freely and accepting divergent opinions are essential elements of dialogue. The exercise of freedom of religion or belief is unthinkable without the exercise of freedom of expression — a freedom that I stress is limited only by boundaries strictly

defined by international law. Hate speech, which promotes or justifies hate, violence or discrimination, is clearly unacceptable, and is therefore prohibited by international law.

In France, under the principle of secularism, the State does not interfere in religious affairs. Faith is an individual choice, and the State respects everyone's freedom of belief. It ensures that all believers can practice their religion. It is not intended to ignore the diversity of opinions, cultures and beliefs that exist throughout the world. But it seems to us that the best way to limit the clashes that occur between them is for public authorities, while taking great care to ensure that the conditions for dialogue among the followers of various beliefs are met and preserved, to never interfere in what is above all the exercise of an individual freedom. We commend the peacemaking role played by certain religious leaders and organizations and condemn any rhetoric from other religious leaders and organizations that stirs up hatred and violence. Women, men, young and old, believers and non-believers alike, we all have a role to play in promoting reconciliation and peace. And it is civil society first and foremost, including human rights advocates, that has an essential role to play in preserving peace.

The role of the Council is to work for the maintenance of international peace and security. Respect for international law is the first and essential condition for that, and should guide us as we work concretely, crisis by crisis, region by region, to devise political solutions. The settlement of disputes requires political solutions that bring together all stakeholders. Today we heard talk of peaceful coexistence. Let us be more ambitious. Let us choose to live together — all people, as they are, respecting and tolerating one another and our individual rights. Let us not be satisfied with peaceful coexistence. Let us aspire to live together.

Rest assured that France will always stand by those who fight for freedom, equality and fraternity. Those ideals are enshrined in our history and in our institutions, as are human rights, which provide, as I have said, the most comprehensive and protective framework for all people. In accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, France will continue to promote that universal approach in the Security Council and all other organs of the United Nations.

Mrs. Shino (Japan): I thank you, Madam President, for organizing this meeting. I also thank the Secretary-General for his intervention and His Eminence Grand Imam Al-Tayeb, His Excellency Archbishop Gallagher and Ms. Ibn Ziaten for their powerful calls for tolerance and peace.

Today we find ourselves in a world that is more troubled by violent conflict than at any time since the Second World War, with a staggering 2 billion people living in conflict zones. Intolerance, violent extremism and discrimination are serious factors that fuel the emergence, intensification and repetitive nature of conflicts. Given that undeniable reality, it is befitting for the international community, including the United Nations system and in particular the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Economic and Social Council, to now employ a perspective of tolerance as a means to address those issues and thereby advance sustainable development and international peace and security.

Diversity can lead to violence if it drives a wedge in a society. Conversely, when paired with tolerance, diversity can serve as a catalyst for promoting the formation of an inclusive society enriched with colourful cultural values. In the light of the diverse nature of our present world, the need to cultivate tolerance and strengthen our resilience against intolerance and violent extremism is evident from that perspective, too.

Japan recognizes the significant role that community and religious leaders can play to meet that need. Since 2018, Japan has been organizing the Dialogue on Countering Violent Extremism in the Middle East, inviting influential religious figures and Government officials from the region. That Dialogue serves as a platform for participants to explore crucial aspects of combating violent extremism, including recent discussions on developing counter-narratives against it. In the most recent forum, the participants also exchanged views with the Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research. In the Middle East, Japan has undertaken various initiatives to support economic and social development for Palestinians and build confidence among the relevant parties. Those include the Jericho Agro-Industrial Park, the Corridor for Peace and Prosperity flagship project and the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development. Those frameworks can help

lay the groundwork for promoting tolerance in the region through economic and social stability.

Giving priority to safeguarding and empowering individuals and communities is crucial in the fight against violent extremism, with the ultimate goal of fostering lives characterized by freedom and dignity. Embracing a human security approach therefore emerges as an effective means to do so. Japan has consistently leveraged such an approach, including through the United Nations trust fund for human security. For example, our recent efforts in East Java, a province in Indonesia known to have suffered from acts of violent extremism, took an integrated approach based on human security among vulnerable individuals and groups. Specific measures included campaigns at the village level to counter violent extremism, preventing recruitment through violent extremism via the Internet, social networking services and other modern technologies and addressing its harmful trap. The project was also aimed at strengthening the education and judicial systems — a key measure in addressing the issues of intolerance, violent extremism and discrimination to build peace.

It is imperative that the international community, including the Council, undertake effective measures aimed at addressing intolerance and promoting reconciliation and peacebuilding in societies marred by conflicts. In the light of that, the draft resolution on tolerance and international peace and security put forth by the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom may serve as a catalyst to encourage and support those endeavours. In that vein, Japan supports the draft resolution.

Japan steadfastly reaffirms its commitment to conflict prevention and the establishment of long-lasting peace. The core of those efforts is grounded in the principles of tolerance, peaceful coexistence and ensuring human security.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the United Arab Emirates for having organized a meeting on such an important topic as the values of human fraternity in promoting and sustaining peace. We thank Secretary-General Guterres, Grand Imam Al-Tayeb, Archbishop Gallagher and Ms. Ibn Ziaten for their comprehensive briefings.

Discussing this topic in these challenging times allows us to shed light on the importance of the values of human fraternity, tolerance, the culture of peace and

peaceful coexistence among different peoples. It also enables us to recall the origins and fundamental pillars of our Organization as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Today more than ever before, States Members of the United Nations are called upon to reaffirm their willingness to demonstrate tolerance and live in peace with one another as good neighbours, as well as to promote international cooperation, including with the aim of resolving international issues of an economic, social, cultural and humanitarian nature. The very principles of the Charter of the United Nations must form the basis of a truly multipolar world, which takes into account the values of human fraternity.

Today's topic is also in line with Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, according to which:

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

We fully embrace that important principle. We firmly believe that the diversity of traditions and specificities of historical development — everything that underpins the values of human fraternity — should serve to unify the international community. Regardless of the contradictions may arise between States, the universal values shared by all major religions of the world and rooted in cultural and historical traditions can be a reliable basis for dialogue and partnership.

The Russian Federation, as a multi-ethnic and multiconfessional State, endeavours to promote dialogue and partnership between representatives of different cultures, religions and civilizations and consistently pursues that policy within international and regional forums.

Pride of place in international cooperation in that context is held by the United Nations and its Alliance of Civilizations, which plays a leading role in fostering full-fledged inter-civilizational dialogue aimed at achieving harmony among the representatives of various religions, faiths and cultures. We trust that the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations will continue its constructive efforts to facilitate the inculcation of a spirit of peace and global citizenship in order to deepen understanding among people — in particular, young people — of such values as peace, tolerance, openness and mutual respect, which are essential in shaping a culture of peace.

We are very concerned about the increasing number of cases of discrimination, intolerance and extremism based on racial or ethnic grounds or other hatred, Islamophobia, antisemitism and Christianophobia, primarily in European countries. Enjoying impunity, digital platforms and social media often spread disinformation and hate speech, disrespect the religious and spiritual values of various faiths, provide platforms for extremists and undermine tolerance and diversity. One of the clearest manifestations of intolerance is Russophobia, which we addressed during a special meeting of the Security Council, held on our initiative on 14 March (see S/PV.9280).

We all say that it is unacceptable to target places of worship. In this regard, we would like to draw particular attention to the flagrant violations of the universal human and constitutional rights of the followers of canonical Orthodox Christianity in Ukraine. That is happening with the tacit consent of the sponsors of the Kyiv regime. Discriminatory legislation continues to enable the seizure of churches of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the forced, illegal liquidation of their communities. Such measures are compounded by violence against worshippers. Numerous cases of arson and vandalism in churches have been recorded. The hierarchy and followers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church are subjected to discrimination and physical and moral violence. Over the course of several months, the entire world has borne witness to people who are devoted to their faith protect the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra and courageously resist extremists and pressure by the Kyiv authorities.

The Ukrainian media has launched an unbridled defamation campaign against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, calling for a complete ban on its activities. Against that backdrop, particularly cynical is the lack of response from international rights advocates to the violence against, and the persecution of, worshippers, as well as to the destruction and appropriation of religious sites. In turn, we drew the attention of the international community to that situation and convened a special meeting of the Security Council on the persecution of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church by the Kyiv authorities on 17 January (see S/PV.9245). We also held an Arria Formula meeting on the matter. We can also see that, at the instigation of the leaders of the Kyiv regime, there has been an increase in Islamophobia in Ukraine.

Protecting places of worship, including mosques, synagogues and churches, is an obligation of States

guaranteed under international law and national legislation and by religion and the norms of human morality. Examples of the faith-based persecution of worshippers, as well as persecution based on national, ethnic and linguistic affiliation, are quite numerous.

We are convinced that representatives of the world's traditional religions can — and should — engage more actively in efforts to sustain peace and resolve armed conflicts. We commend the activities of religious leaders aimed at strengthening and developing interfaith dialogue and achieving understanding and awareness of shared human values, as well as respect for the beliefs of those who follow other religious traditions.

We welcome the signing of documents reflecting those goals, such as the joint declaration by His Holiness Pope Francis and His Eminence the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, entitled “Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together”, in February 2019 and the joint statement by His Holiness Pope Francis and His Holiness Patriarch Kirill in February 2016.

We agree that State and religious leaders must understand the exceptional importance of working to achieve inter-ethnic and interfaith unity and fraternity, while seeking paths to dialogue and compromise in order to ensure an equitable world order and prosperity. There is always an alternative to confrontation. That alternative is mutually respectful dialogue aimed at resolving international friction and creating an atmosphere that is conducive to peace and understanding.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I am grateful to the United Arab Emirates for convening today's important meeting. I thank the Secretary-General, His Eminence Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, Archbishop Gallagher and Ms. Latifa Ibn Ziaten for their briefings.

Respect for all human rights is — and must be — an essential beacon for our work in the Security Council. The freedom of religion or belief, including the freedom not to have a religion, is a fundamental human right. And yet religious minorities have time and again been specifically targeted, including in conflict. That was a key finding of the report commissioned in 2019 by former United Kingdom Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt from the Bishop of Truro.

From the Yazidis in Iraq to the Rohingya in Myanmar and the recent case of the Baha'i in Houthi-

controlled areas of Yemen, minorities are too often targeted on the grounds of religion or belief. There is also evidence that those minorities may avoid seeking humanitarian aid due to fear of intolerance, including Sunni Muslims in Syria, Shi'a Hazara communities in Afghanistan and Christian communities in Nigeria.

When communities come under attack in situations of conflict, it is the role of the Council to address it. There is more we and the United Nations system can do to monitor incitement to violence against all minority communities in conflict. We should ensure that we have the tools in place for horizon scanning to address incitement and extremist rhetoric before it tips over into violence.

Community and religious leaders have a responsibility to reject hate and extremism in their name, which can fuel violence and conflict. They can also play a unique role in conflict prevention, reconciliation and peacebuilding initiatives. At the grassroots level, interreligious and intercultural dialogue can help build trust and understanding between communities and combat intolerance. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, who sits on the Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation, addressed the Council in 2018 on the role religious institutions can play in mediation and reconciliation in fragile States (see S/PV.8334).

This year is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland — a peace deal that Catholic and Protestant clergy helped deliver through mediation between adversaries. In Sierra Leone, the Inter-Religious Council was crucial to the signing of the Lomé Peace Accord, which brought peace in 1999 after a decade of war. And in Mali, a country threatened by violent extremism, some Islamic figures have been working tirelessly in support of peace.

Women leaders are of course a crucial part of that process. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution means that negotiations are more likely to succeed, and peace agreements sustained. The Ecumenical Women Peacebuilders Network is a powerful example — a nationally recognized group of Catholic and Protestant women church leaders in Colombia who helped drive the 2016 peace accords. They now help foster reconciliation as former combatants return home. As a Council, we should ensure that United Nations peace

efforts are making use of the leadership of women, religious leaders, youth and wider civil society.

Human rights and the freedom of expression underpin our work. They must be at the heart of any attempt to advance the freedom of religion and belief. Attempts to tackle intolerance will not be successful if they do not prioritize inclusivity and equality and safeguard the freedom of expression and opinion. Those principles are reflected in the draft resolution (S/2023/427) we presented with our partners, the United Arab Emirates, which we hope will be adopted later today.

The United Kingdom is a proud champion of the rights of members of marginalized groups, including women and girls, and is committed to defending them.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): Brazil thanks the United Arab Emirates for organizing today's important high-level meeting. We also thank the Secretary-General and our three briefers for their valuable contributions and wisdom.

Today's briefing is in line with the importance that Brazil accords to combating the root causes of conflict, to which promoting a culture of peace, tolerance and mutual understanding is key. That is especially true for our common efforts on conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

As recalled in the concept note for this briefing (S/2023/417, annex), almost 30 years ago, hate speech was one of the main drivers of the genocide in Rwanda. While then the radicalization of individuals was stimulated by radio broadcasts and printed propaganda, today we witness an alarming increase in the use of hate speech on social media with the potential to exacerbate armed conflicts and threaten stability around the world. The situations in Mali, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are concrete instances of that worrisome trend. The social dimension of that phenomenon must be taken into account. Inequalities, marginalization, racism and the feeling of not belonging can drive individuals to engaging in hate speech, either online or offline, which creates a fertile environment for the outbreak, escalation and recurrence of conflicts.

The spread of disinformation, misinformation and hate speech has a direct and detrimental effect on the work of the United Nations, especially on peacekeeping missions and on the safety and security of peacekeepers.

In that connection, we highlight the central importance of the use of strategic communications. As stated by the Council in last year's presidential statement on the issue (S/PRST/2022/5), strategic communications contribute to promoting the women and peace and security agenda, building trust with local communities and creating a protective environment for civilians in areas affected by armed conflicts. The role of civil society, including religious leaders, in building an environment of trust, tolerance and understanding should be acknowledged and strengthened.

The legitimacy, first-hand knowledge and cultural understanding of the root causes of contentious issues in conflicts are important assets in setting the conditions conducive to dialogue and sustainable peace. Cultivating a culture of peace and tolerance entails inclusivity. The promotion of a culture of peace and tolerance, which in many contexts involves interreligious dialogue, can effectively contribute to advancing our peacebuilding efforts in societies affected by conflict. Tackling discrimination, as well as protecting the most vulnerable groups, including victims and minorities, is key to strengthening the social fabric in post-conflict situations. A strong investment in education is also needed in order to build an environment of tolerance.

It is our view that sustainable peace will not be achieved as long as the root causes of conflict are not addressed. That includes ethnic, religious, cultural and ideological intolerance, but also social injustice and the scourge of hunger. For all of us, in our respective societies, there is a necessity to better understand one another, both in our differences and in our shared humanity, which is the only path to be taken towards peace.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the initiative of the United Arab Emirates as President of the Security Council to convene today's meeting. I thank Secretary-General Guterres for his statement, and I thank Grand Imam Al-Tayeb and Archbishop Gallagher for their briefings at the start of this meeting. I also listened carefully to Ms. Ibn Ziaten's statement.

Our world is at a crossroads in history where the peace, development, security and governance deficits are deepening. Various forms of intolerance and extremism are eroding mutual trust between fellow human beings and among nations. As a result, the international community's collective ability to address

global challenges in solidarity is severely hampered. In that context, it is highly relevant to discuss the value of the spirit of fraternity in promoting and sustaining peace.

I would like to share some of our observations and reflections.

First, with regard to respect for civilizational diversity, diversity is a hallmark of our world and the fountainhead from which human progress springs. Civilizations differ only geographically and in terms of their distinctive characteristics. There is no such thing as a superior or an inferior civilization. To believe that one's own civilization is a cut above the rest and to be hell-bent on transforming, or even replacing, other civilizations is sheer folly on an epistemological level and disastrous when applied in practice. In history, colonial conquests and plundering driven by civilizational superiority and white supremacy wreaked devastation in Asia, Africa and Latin America as never before seen. Today interference, intervention, provocation and incitement, under the banner of so-called universal values, are creating new conflicts and new confrontations.

China believes and advocates that, in this world of interdependence, while we should have the pride, confidence and ambition to promote our respective civilizations so they can shine with vibrant brilliance, we must also open our hearts and minds in order to embrace the development of other civilizations and the vision to promote exchanges of mutual appreciation and learning. Speaking of mutual learning and harmony among civilizations, the United Nations, including its Alliance of Civilizations, has a big part to play. It is incumbent upon all countries to work to that end together.

In March, the President of China, His Excellency Mr. Xi Jinping, unveiled the Global Civilization initiative, which advocates respecting civilizational diversity, promoting the common values of humankind, valuing civilizational heritage and innovation and strengthening international cultural exchanges and cooperation. China is ready to work with the rest of the international community to refresh the landscape of cultural exchanges and to promote the convergence of different cultures and people-to-people engagement among all nations in the world so that our collective garden of diverse civilizations will teem with vitality in a riot of colour.

Secondly, enhanced mutual trust and respect, treating one another as equals and promoting mutual trust are a sine qua non for consistent and healthy interactions among nations. Recently, we have seen some encouraging developments in the Middle East, with Saudi Arabia and Iran announcing the resumption of diplomatic ties between them as an outcome of the Beijing dialogue, thereby setting off a rising tide of reconciliation in the region. Syria has returned to the fold of the League of Arab States, marking a reunion of the Arab family after 12 years. Those developments have set a good example in terms of mutual respect among countries by rising above their differences, which has injected positive energy into unity and cooperation among the countries of the region. The international community should also seize that pivotal opportunity and work with a greater sense of urgency to resolve the Palestinian issue in a comprehensive and just manner on the basis of the two-State solution and to promote the peaceful coexistence of Palestine and Israel so that their two peoples, the Arabs and the Jews, can seek development together, hand in hand.

Under the new circumstances, members of the Security Council should be more united, give substance to their commitments and better discharge the mandates of maintaining international peace and security. We should focus on solving the root causes of the issues on the Council's agenda beyond a mere piecemeal approach to crisis management and invest more energy in our quest for lasting peace and common security. We should remain committed to the political settlement of disputes and devote more efforts to negotiation, good offices and mediation. We should do our utmost to launch dialogue to stop conflict and war. We should bring the unique role of regional organizations into full play and encourage them to find regional solutions to regional issues. We must take an unequivocal stand against any interference in the internal affairs of other countries, against any attempt to stir up tensions to serve one's own interests, against drawing ideological boundaries for the purpose of bloc politics and against hegemonic bullying in international relations.

Thirdly, we must promote social inclusion. Social inclusion bears on individuals' well-being and rights, and has an impact on the orientation of a country's foreign policy. Some countries are seriously troubled by their frayed social fabric and political polarization. It not only slows down achieving stability and development for themselves, but also places their

foreign policies on the slippery slope of conservatism and populism, with tangible negative spillover effects. Those countries need to do some soul-searching and genuinely address the chronic problems related to their own national governance, instead of blaming their problems on external factors and diverting attention to scapegoats. In particular, political leaders should shoulder the responsibilities of their time, forge social consensus and actively promote reforms. They must not ride on or be propelled by the wave of populism.

Hate speech exacerbates social rifts. Extremism is running rampant. Mis- and disinformation continue to spread unchecked. Religious intolerance and racial discrimination against people of African and Asian descent are on the rise. Islamophobia has reached epidemic proportions, which should be cause for concern and vigilance. As a matter of course, the freedom of expression should be protected, but it should not be a license for hate speech. Neither should it be an excuse for Government inaction. Terrorism is a malignant tumour ailing human civilization. It must not be linked to any ethnicity, religion, country or civilization. We call for the effective implementation of General Assembly resolution 75/309 and for a strong global momentum to counter hate speech.

Fourthly, we must focus on shared development, which is an important indicator of civilizational progress and a concrete manifestation of the latter. Leaving no one or country behind is the solemn commitment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Currently, the global economic recovery is fraught with mounting difficulties, and developing countries are faced by grim challenges related to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Many of the hard-won development gains have even been undone. Developing countries' specific vulnerabilities and fragility are ultimately rooted in the unfair, unjust and unreasonable international economic order. Moreover, in order to maintain their dominant position, certain countries have indiscriminately imposed technology and economic sanctions, while advocating decoupling and cutting off supply chains and building small, high-walled silos. Such acts, which prevent development and try to turn back the clock, are as immoral as they are unsustainable. The international community must firmly reject them.

This year, we are looking forward to the midpoint review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the SDG Summit. The United Nations should take that

opportunity to increase its attention to, and investment in, development issues in order to give tangible hope to all peoples. The United Nations development system should be a true partner of developing countries, while genuinely demonstrating its concern and care for them. Developed countries should honour their official assistance commitments. International financial institutions should take steps towards reform, as soon as possible, and redress moral deficits and must not be turned into private funds and private banks manipulated by an individual country. It is also important to effectively respect developing countries' right to development, resolutely oppose making various excuses for technological strangleholds and economic coercion and safeguard fairness and justice.

Humankind is a community with a shared future of shared joys and sorrows. Whether or not our generation will be able to replace division with unity, confrontation with cooperation and exclusion with tolerance will determine the future of human civilization. China stands ready to work with the rest of the international community to practice genuine multilateralism, achieve common security, promote common development and blaze a new trail together towards a better shared future.

Mr. Hauri Switzerland (*spoke in French*): I thank the United Arab Emirates for convening this debate. I also thank the Secretary-General, His Eminence Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, His Excellency Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher and Ms. Latifa Ibn Ziaten for their briefings.

Today's debate is part of an approach aimed at further discussing emerging issues and threats related to international peace and security. In that regard, it is in consonance with the debate on futureproofing trust, which the Security Council addressed a month ago under Switzerland's presidency (see S/PV.9315). At that time, we underscored that trust is based on norms, facts and inclusion.

I would like to emphasize three points.

First, this year we are celebrating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was born out of the collective experience of total destruction and genocide rooted in hate speech, intolerance and the vilification of minorities and religions. The Declaration acknowledges the inherent dignity of all individuals. Their equal and inalienable rights are the foundation of freedom, justice and peace. We have heard various accounts within the Security

Council that demonstrate that guaranteeing human rights is imperative at every stage of the peace process. Ensuring the full range of norms of international human rights law is crucial to ending conflict and building lasting peace. The added value of data-based monitoring and reporting on human rights during and after conflicts is well acknowledged by the Council, including through the 11 human rights components in peacekeeping operations.

Secondly, discrimination, intolerance, incitement to hatred and violent extremism present many challenges for our societies. Switzerland condemns them in all their forms. In countering those phenomena, respect for human rights, in particular the freedom of expression, must be guaranteed both online and offline. The freedom of expression is the cornerstone of all pluralistic and inclusive societies. Equal participation in public life is critical to building and maintaining trust among people and between them and the State. An open civic space, including in particular women, people belonging to minorities and vulnerable groups and young people, helps build deeper and greater trust in institutions. Trust and the rule of law are the undeniable bedrock of stability, conflict prevention and lasting peace.

Thirdly, in the coming weeks, the Council must take advantage of the opportunity provided by the New Agenda for Peace to reaffirm the vital role of existing normative frameworks, such as the women and peace and security, children in armed conflict and human rights agendas. The frameworks form the anchor of our multilateral cooperation in matters related to peace and security. That is why we must reaffirm their importance and renew our commitment to supporting them.

Dialogue, openness and mutual understanding, as well as international law, international human rights law and the rule of law, are tools for peaceful coexistence among States, communities and individuals, without discrimination. Furthermore, compassion and mutual respect are universal values that unite us in our humanity. Switzerland will continue to work to ensure that the term "fraternity", highlighted by today's debate, includes everyone, including women and girls, regardless of their origin or sexual orientation. In that way, we will be able to continue to build stable and inclusive societies in order to promote and maintain lasting peace.

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): I too thank the Secretary-General, His Eminence Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, His Excellency Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher and Ms. Latifa Ibn Ziaten for sharing their thoughts and insights with us today.

International human rights law provides a robust normative framework for protecting the freedoms of expression and religion or belief in the context of peace and security. Those rights, which are interdependent, interrelated and mutually reinforcing, are crucial to the creation of pluralistic, tolerant, inclusive and democratic societies. The right to the freedom of religion or belief includes the freedom for everyone to have or not to have a religion or belief of their choice, and the freedom to practice it, either alone or in community with others and in public or private. Protecting that right includes protecting the rights and freedoms of those who hold contrary or minority viewpoints. We condemn any attempts to limit the exercise of those fundamental freedoms. We also underscore the positive role of quality education and a free and independent media in preventing intolerance and prejudice and in promoting mutual respect, understanding and solidarity.

Tolerance and inclusion are crucial for promoting human rights and sustainable peace. In armed conflicts around the world, people experience discrimination, intolerance, hate speech and other forms of violence, both online and offline, based on their sex, religion or belief, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics. Intersectional and gender-transformative responses and prevention efforts are therefore required to address those multiple and often overlapping forms of discrimination and to advance an inclusive and holistic approach.

We are deeply concerned about the increasing instances of harassment, coercion and reprisals, including by State and non-State actors, against individuals exercising their right to free speech. We deplore the misuse of broadly defined extremism laws to violate human rights and fundamental freedoms, including to target human rights defenders, civil society, journalists and political opposition. At the same time, Malta condemns all acts of violent extremism, regardless of motivation or ideology, and underscores the importance of preventing and countering such threats in full compliance with international human rights law. All Member States have the responsibility to protect and uphold the full spectrum of human rights,

including the human rights of diverse women, persons with disabilities, young women, LGBTIQ+ individuals, older persons and members of marginalized ethnic and religious groups.

We remain deeply concerned about the impact of discriminatory laws, the gender-biased enforcement and application of existing laws, harmful societal norms and practices, structural inequalities and discriminatory views on women or gender roles in society. We therefore underscore the importance of promoting gender equality by addressing the root causes of discrimination and sexual and gender-based violence against all women and girls as part of conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and humanitarian action.

I conclude by stressing that Malta is committed to ensuring that neither women nor the women and peace and security agenda are instrumentalized in efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism. Advancing gender equality and ensuring the full, equal, safe and meaningful participation and leadership of diverse women in all efforts to build peace and prevent conflicts are goals unto themselves and must never be reduced to national security tactics.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): I would like to thank you, Madam President, and the United Arab Emirates for convening us to discuss this important topic. I also thank the Secretary-General and His Eminence Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, as well as Archbishop Gallagher and Ms. Ibn Ziaten for their valuable insights.

Diversity is a fact of life and one of the most amazing features of human civilization. Over centuries, we have learned to accept it not simply as an inevitability, but rather as an asset — a strength. With more and better education and increased human mobility in an increasingly interconnected world, we believe that diversity constitutes a strong bond that binds humans, united in our distinct cultures, histories, religions, philosophies and orientations. Regrettably, not everyone sees it that way. While we cherish diversity, powerful countervailing forces, those of old inspiration and those with new tactics, try to use — or better, misuse — diversity as a cause to harm, hate, discriminate against, oppress and dominate. It is one of the major challenges of our fast-evolving times.

Where we see a paradox to be treated and cured in the prevalence of divisions and mistrust as societies

are becoming more multi-ethnic and multi-religious, others see an opportunity to score goals. We are deeply concerned about the alarming increase in bigotry, hate speech and discrimination based on religion, belief, race, ethnicity or gender. Radical discourse and hate speech have become mainstream as if they were the new normal. The rise of antisemitism and Islamophobia, and of hate-filled intolerance of diversity, including against LGBTIQ+ people, in various forms of communication, including through the Internet and social media, should be a concern for all of us, not only because it manifests an absence of compassion, humility, respect and acceptance of the others, but also because it always leads to tensions and violence. We are all born free and must feel equal, despite origin, social class or ethnicity, the colour of our skin, the God we worship, our gender or the choices we make in life. Everyone wins when we see diversity as a richness and not as a threat.

If unattended, hatred can have detrimental effects in a society, but it becomes deadly when it is weaponized to gain, exercise or retain power. Da'esh, to name the most brutal and despicable form of intolerance, has been defeated, but its ideology and appeal have not disappeared. The political weaponization of diversity, the us-versus-them mentality, neo-Nazis or supremacists and the singling out of people, including migrants, by their ethnicity, create deep social fractures and undermine trust between different groups. They may serve to justify attacks, and in the worst case, as during the Holocaust, to annihilate those unwanted. What may be social, economic or political grievances could be quickly and easily turned into religious or inter-ethnic conflicts, which most often result in bloodshed. If anything, the genocides in Srebrenica and Rwanda have taught us how easy and quickly hate and propaganda can turn people, neighbours and friends of different origin into enemies. We know now that the biggest mistake we can make is to take things for granted.

The task before us is to build a common front against hatred, xenophobia, racism and genocide deniers and to sanction all those who undermine social cohesion, foment violence or endanger peace. It is not easy, and there are no quick fixes. We just need to be alert, stand up and respond to all forms of disinformation and act

quickly, because misinformation, distorted reality and conspiracy theories always fly faster. We need to create an environment that is conducive to a vibrant civil society and an independent media to scrutinize and dismiss falsehoods and strategies of hatred and those who benefit from using them. The recognition of diversity requires vigorous citizenship education. Citizens who understand the unity-diversity nexus and act accordingly do not materialize out of thin air; they are educated. That is why we need to invest in quality education and critical thinking as a shield against hatred, violence and extremism in all its forms.

A successful approach also requires good and transparent governance, development, the rule of law, human rights, equality, accountable institutions and justice for all. It requires genuine effort and dedication. It is a society-wide challenge in every country. It requires an inclusive approach that includes religious and community leaders playing a critical role.

Let us not forget and let us be clear: fighting intolerance cannot and must never be used as an excuse for curbing freedoms and justifying repression. No matter where we live, it requires that we never deviate from our shared norms as solemnly enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

There are many good examples to recognize and follow. I will take the one I know the best: the situation in my own country, Albania. Home to various religious communities, including Muslims, Orthodox, Catholics and Jews, it is a place where living in mutual respect has been a significant aspect of the society for centuries. It has embraced and cherishes a culture of acceptance and respect for different religions, with interactions that take place in a spirit of harmony, with shared cultural celebrations, intermarriages and cooperative community efforts. We are proud to offer a living example of how religious diversity can thrive within a society where there is a commitment to tolerance, respect and dialogue.

We profoundly believe that it is only by ensuring equal rights for all that we can hope to eradicate hatred and extremism and enable every human being to flourish and live in peace with one another.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.