



## Security Council open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, 18 January 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Her Excellency Ambassador Vanessa Frazier  
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

---

Thank you, President

I also thank Tor [*Tor Wennesland – Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process*] for his comprehensive briefing on the latest developments in the Middle East.

This open debate comes at a timely juncture following recent heightened tensions on the ground. Last year proved to be the deadliest year in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in recent memory and, as we have seen, the beginning of this year has already been marked with further incidents, including political decisions, that can easily lead to escalation and threaten regional stability.

President

It is deeply regrettable that we continue to witness tragic casualties being suffered by both sides. Provocative decisions and unilateral actions, as well as inflammatory rhetoric must be avoided and condemned, as they will undoubtedly continue to exacerbate and undermine the already fragile situation, and only contribute to further instability.



The developments we witnessed in and around the Holy Sites on 3 January is one such example.

As we had made clear in the Security Council's emergency session of 5 January, Malta reiterates the need for the integrity of the Holy Sites and the legal and historic status quo to be upheld and fully respected at all times.

We continue to acknowledge and respect the established role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan as the Custodian of the Holy Sites.

President

We are concerned by unilateral actions which seek to punish political actors from seeking international legal remedies. As a Member State committed to multilateralism, and the rules-based international order, we find this approach unconstructive. We hope that measures announced will be reconsidered as a positive sign for peace and stability in the region.

More broadly, political announcements that proclaim a commitment to *'advance and develop settlement in all parts of the land of Israel – in the Galilee, Negev, Golan Heights, and Judea and Samaria'* similarly move us further-and-further away from the two-State solution.

President

On the security front, Malta continues to strongly condemn any actions which jeopardize the lives of Palestinian and Israeli civilians. This includes



terrorist attacks committed against Israelis, which are unacceptable, and Israeli military operations and settler violence in the West Bank, resulting in the loss of Palestinian lives. We will equally call for justice and accountability for the victims, which in most cases are women and children, who suffer disproportionately in conflict circumstances.

President

Malta remains concerned about the humanitarian situation in Gaza, and once again underlines the importance of opening crossing points and ensuring unhindered humanitarian access.

Malta continues to recognise UNRWA's significant endeavours to assist, protect and advocate for Palestinian refugees, particularly in the fields of education and health care, and considers it to be a stabilising force in the region. We also call for the international community to bolster its support towards the Agency's funding, which is in dire need of contributions.

President

To conclude, Malta once again reaffirms its commitment to a just and comprehensive resolution of the Middle East conflict based on a two-State Solution along the pre-1967 borders, addressing the legitimate aspirations of both sides, with Jerusalem as the future Capital of two states living side-by-side in peace and security, in line with the relevant UNSC resolutions and internationally agreed parameters.



THE PERMANENT MISSION  
OF MALTA TO THE UN NEW YORK



**Malta**

2023-2024

UNITED NATIONS  
SECURITY COUNCIL

We remain convinced that this remains the only solution to peace in the region and that dialogue and commitments by the relevant stakeholders, is essential to reach a settlement which avoids further violence, suffering and escalations.

I thank you.