



Security Council Briefing on the Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question, 22 March 2023

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

President

I begin by thanking Special Coordinator Wennesland for his briefing.

A little over a month ago, this Council adopted a Presidential Statement, the first product since 2016. This underlined, among its key points, opposition to unilateral measures that impede peace; condemned all acts of violence against civilians; and underlined the elements made by Security Council resolution 2334.

Regrettably, in recent weeks we continued to witness alarming patterns of violence, terrorism, and loss of life, disregarding the provisions of both the resolution and the Presidential Statement, and threatening further escalations.

Malta is deeply concerned by this persistent negative trajectory of developments, and we are particularly appalled by the number of child victims, on both sides, of such violence.

In this context, we regret the number of casualties resulting from Israeli operations in the West Bank, leaving several Palestinians dead, including children.



We urge Israeli authorities to exercise restraint in the use of live ammunition in search and arrest operations. We once again underscore the fact that the targeting of unarmed non-combatants and children is unacceptable.

President

We also remain disturbed by the increasing incidence of acts of terror, including the most recent terror attack in Tel Aviv on 9 March, for which Hamas has claimed responsibility. Malta unequivocally condemns any acts of terror and incentivisation of terror, for which there can be no justification, and recalls the obligation of the Palestinian Authority to renounce and confront terror. We strongly condemn, but also express concern, regarding acts of terror carried out by young Palestinian teenagers.

Along the same lines, Malta condemns the horrific settler violence within the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and we are profoundly concerned by the increase in such behaviour. Escalations such as the retaliatory arson attacks which terrorised the town of Hawara on 26 February should not be repeated and those involved need to be held accountable.

President

Malta reiterates that Israel's continued construction and expansion of settlements, demolition of homes, and displacement of Palestinians within the occupied territories are concerning. Such acts constitute unilateral actions that violate international law and Security Council resolutions,



including resolution 2334, and obstruct the viability of an independent, contiguous Palestinian state.

We also underscore that any indiscriminate firing of rockets into Israel by armed groups in Gaza is a violation of international law and completely unacceptable.

President

In the face of these troubling developments, Malta remains convinced that dialogue is the key foundation for de-escalation. We commend the parties involved in the Aqaba Communique as well as the Sharm El Sheikh Communique, and call for these parties to observe the positive agreements made.

This is of imminent importance due to the approaching period of religious festivities. Most particularly during this period, we underscore the urgent need for parties to refrain from unilateral actions and incitements which attempt to alter the status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem. The special role of Jordan as Custodian must be respected as one which is crucial to uphold the peaceful coexistence of all three monotheistic religions in the region.

Malta recalls the latest joint statement on behalf of the 27 EU Member States issued on 8 March, in stating that we need to consider new perspectives for peace. In this regard we welcome constructive commitments made with our partners in the Arab League to revive the Arab Peace Initiative.



President

Malta's position on the Palestinian question remains clear: a just and comprehensive resolution of the Middle East conflict must be based on the 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.

I thank you, President.