



Open Debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, 25 April 2023

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

Thank you, and I also thank Special Coordinator Wennesland for his briefing and for his Office's constant efforts to maintain calm, particularly during this past month.

Regrettably, over the past weeks several escalations against the backdrop of religious festivities have again brought us too close to the brink of an uncontrollable and explosive scenario, threatening to trigger wider confrontations. These events should serve as a wake-up call.

Malta remains extremely concerned at the unprecedented levels of violence, provocations and unilateral actions which are jeopardising any attempts at constructive remediation of the situation, and which continue to directly impact the lives and security of thousands of people.

The protection of civilians demands our undivided attention and focus.

Malta unreservedly condemns all acts of terrorism and incitements to terrorism, which continue to threaten civilians and result in further tragic loss of life. Acts of terrorism can never be justified. We equally condemn indiscriminate rocket fire from Gaza, and more recently from south Lebanon.



In this respect, Malta reiterates Israel's legitimate right to self-defence. Nonetheless, we condemn Israel's excessive use of force, and stress the need to respect the principles of necessity and proportionality, and in particular the responsibility to protect women and children.

We call on all parties to respect international law, including international humanitarian law.

We also echo the Presidential Statement of 20 February, which opposes unilateral measures, including Israel's expansion of settlements, legalisation of settlement outposts, and demolition of Palestinian homes.

We are deeply concerned by worrying legal amendments and policies regarding settlements which continue to facilitate the fracturing of the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly in the West Bank. The recent repeal of the 2005 Disengagement Law, as well as the transfer of governance of Palestinian territory to civilian administration are issues of deep concern, exacerbating conflict and obstructing peace.

At the same time, we underscore the importance that the Palestinian Authority holds democratic elections. We remain encouraged by the signing of the Algiers Declaration of October 2022, and continue to urge the Palestinian factions to engage in good faith in the reconciliation process, as a vital step towards a renewed Palestinian government which is representative of the Palestinian people.



Along the same lines, Malta expresses concern at the political and fiscal situation of the Palestinian Authority. This is negatively impacting the livelihood of Palestinians.

The disturbing events we witnessed during the past weeks at the Holy Sites, and the cyclical violence that ensued, should serve as an additional warning for actors to de-escalate and promote calm and constructive dialogue. These events came uncomfortably close to triggering a conflict with tragic ramifications.

It is imperative that the international community aligns towards encouraging a return to a political horizon.

Malta welcomes continued attempts to re-establish crucial dialogue, including the meetings which took place in Aqaba and Sharm El Sheikh, while hoping that such efforts lead towards meaningful de-escalation.

In closing, we reaffirm our 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. We stand convinced that this remains the only viable path to peace.

I thank you.