



Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, 27 June 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 Mr James Zogby [*President of the Arab American Institute*] for his remarks as well as Special Coordinator Wennesland for his sobering briefing, and his continued efforts to de-escalate the volatile situation on the ground.

In 2016, this Council adopted resolution 2334, which provides a clear roadmap towards peace. Nevertheless, the conflict continues, and serious violations of the resolution persist, pushing us further away from a credible peace process in the Middle East.

In the past weeks, we have again seen alarming and deadly violence against civilians, which remains the tragic undercurrent of this prolonged conflict.

Malta strongly condemns the terror attack which took place near the settlement of Eli in the occupied West Bank last week, resulting in the killing of four Israeli civilians. There can be no justification for such appalling acts of violence, including their incitement or their glorification. The subsequent attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinian residents and properties in the West Bank are also unjustifiable, and must not be allowed to continue to take place with impunity.



We remain disturbed by the number of casualties and injuries resulting from Israeli security forces' operations in the West Bank. Military incursions, such as the one that took place in Jenin on 19 June, which left several Palestinians dead, including children, and over ninety injured, are deeply concerning.

The disproportionate use of live ammunition and explosive weapons in populated areas during these operations only contributes to the cycle of violence. Malta urges Israel to exercise utmost restraint, to abide by international humanitarian law, and to prioritise the protection of civilians.

We must also emphasise that too many women and children, on both sides, continue to unjustly suffer the consequences of this conflict. We are also concerned by the detention of Palestinian children for alleged security offences by the Israeli forces and reiterate that the deprivation of liberty of a child should be a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time. We also remain concerned with the involvement of Palestinian youths in terrorist activities.

Malta strongly reiterates concern at the Israeli Government's decisions to expedite expansions of settlements and the advancement of thousands of settlement housing units in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Such actions move us further away from a just and lasting peace, and imperil the viability of an independent, contiguous Palestinian state.

We recall that expansion of settlements, demolition of homes and displacement of Palestinians violate international law and relevant UN



resolutions, including resolution 2334. They also have humanitarian repercussions on Palestinian lives. We call on Israel to halt and reverse such unilateral decisions, which breed division and further enflame tensions.

President

Immediate steps need to be taken to de-escalate the situation, reverse negative trends, and relaunch credible negotiations and dialogue between both parties.

We appeal to both sides to hold further meetings in the Aqaba and Sharm El Sheikh quintet format, in the spirit of de-escalation, and to implement the commitments made in the respective Joint Communiqués.

The international community needs to come together to participate and support international and regional diplomatic efforts aimed at salvaging the stalled peace process. We must return to a political horizon conducive to a just and comprehensive resolution of the 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.