



Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East [2334], 27 September 2023

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

Thank you, President, and I also thank Special Coordinator Wennesland for briefing us on the Secretary-General's report and on recent developments.

Unfortunately, the lack of progress is deeply worrying. Negative trends which erode any prospect of the two-State solution remain commonplace. We are faced with a situation which is increasingly unsustainable for Palestinians and Israelis alike.

Confronted with this negative trajectory, I wish to stress upon three crucial points.

First, Malta reiterates that settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, are in violation of international law and relevant Security Council resolutions. We are therefore concerned by recently announced plans to advance yet another new settlement.

We also remain concerned about demolitions and the forceable transfer of Palestinian communities, and their impact on the viability of a two-State solution.

Second, we need to bring to a complete stop the persistent cycle of acts of violence against civilians, including the incitement to violence and inflammatory rhetoric.



Malta is disturbed by the amount of terror attacks upon Israeli civilians which took place so far this year and we unequivocally condemn these unjustifiable acts. Episodes of settler violence which have terrorised Palestinian communities are equally condemnable.

We call for perpetrators to be swiftly brought to justice.

The repercussions this conflict is having on civilians have seen a distressing upsurge this year, with near daily violence and children being victimised on both sides. As we continue to witness violent acts, we must stress that obligations under international humanitarian law need to be respected, in the paramount interest of protecting civilians.

Political leaders should also refrain from further incitements and provocations that enflame tensions, produce hate and glorify violence. Such inflammatory rhetoric only pushes us further away from meaningful dialogue.

Third, credible negotiations on all final status issues must be the basis of all our efforts. Malta is encouraged by the *'Peace Day Effort'* initiative launched last week here in New York. We look forward to working on its potential to build upon initiatives towards a comprehensive regional peace.



President

Addressing the Palestinian Authority's fiscal and political situation is also key. We urge the Palestinian factions to continue engagement towards a good faith reconciliation process and the PA to hold its postponed national elections without further delay.

Critically, we must strive to address the increasingly dire humanitarian needs of the Palestinians, particularly in Gaza where 1.3 million need humanitarian assistance. On this front, UNRWA remains the strongest beacon of hope for many Palestinians, and demands our increased support in the face of continued funding shortages.

In closing, President, Malta reiterates its unwavering support 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 Security Council resolutions and internationally agreed parameters. A re-commitment to the peace process by all parties is imperative if we are to restore stability and secure a lasting peace.

I thank you.