



General Assembly Debate on the use of the veto on 20 February 2024 under agenda item 'The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question', 4 March 2024

Malta Statement delivered by HE Ambassador Vanessa Frazier
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President, Excellencies

Malta regrets the circumstances that demanded the convening of this debate.

Malta voted in favour of the Algerian draft Security Council resolution calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. We thank Algeria for their approach as pens and for their efforts to generate agreement on a much-needed text.

Malta has repeatedly and unequivocally condemned the Hamas terror attacks of 7 October and subsequent rocket fire into Israel. We reiterate that the immediate and unconditional release of hostages must be a top priority, and may I remind that the UNSC has already passed two resolutions calling for the release of hostages. Therefore, claims that the UNSC is not acting on their behalf are inaccurate.



The scale of human suffering that continues to unfold in Gaza leads to only one conclusion. The Security Council must call for an end to this conflict. Regrettably, so far it has not been able to do so.

As a consequence, we have witnessed increasingly horrific scenes of human tragedy, such as recently in Gaza City, where more than 100 people have been reportedly killed or injured while seeking life-saving aid.

We unequivocally reiterate our call for a permanent ceasefire. This is essential to alleviate the suffering of civilians in Gaza, de-escalate broader regional tensions, and provide the framework where the necessary humanitarian aid can be provided to civilians in Gaza.

As we hold this debate, the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza continues to unfold. 30,000 Palestinians have been killed. Too many are suffering from catastrophic hunger and the outbreak of diseases.



International humanitarian law and the laws of war must be respected by all parties. Military actions during hostilities must always be in line with the principles of distinction, proportionality, and necessity. Parties are also obliged to ensure that civilians and civilian infrastructure are protected. Unhindered humanitarian aid and the safety of UN and humanitarian workers must be guaranteed.

The full implementation of Security Council resolutions 2712 and 2720 remains ever-more pressing.

President

At a time when Israel must facilitate the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance and food aid into Gaza, we remain deeply concerned about the prospect that the Israeli military may extend its campaign into Rafah. The consequences of such a decision would be catastrophic. This area, designated as a 'safe zone', is sheltering half the population of the Strip, including over 600,000 children and their families.



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We also call for the immediate implementation of the Order on provisional measures issued by the ICJ on 26 January.

In conclusion, Malta reiterates its commitment to the realization of 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.

I thank you.