



## Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, 5 April 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Her Excellency Ambassador Vanessa Frazier  
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I will now make a statement in my national capacity.

I begin by thanking the briefers for their statements.

We are deeply shocked by Israel's killing of seven aid workers from World Central Kitchen in Gaza on 1 April. This brings the total number of humanitarians killed in this latest round of conflict in Gaza to more than 220, with 179 of these UN personnel.

A number increasing day by day, we express our sincere condolences to the loved ones of all those UN and humanitarian personnel killed in Gaza.

Malta calls for a thorough, independent, and urgent investigation into this completely unacceptable event, and all previous ones. Accountability for any violations of international law, including international humanitarian law, must be ensured. Perpetrators must be held accountable.



This latest attack once again underlines the urgent need for an immediate and permanent ceasefire.

We note that the movement of the humanitarian staff from World Central Kitchen was carried out in coordination with Israeli authorities, who were notified through the UN's humanitarian notification system. All procedures were followed, and yet this attack still happened.

We stress once again that these systems are in place to ensure that these exact incidents do not take place.

We recall the international humanitarian law obligations of all parties to protect humanitarian workers. Strikes on humanitarian workers are unacceptable especially when they are providing much needed humanitarian assistance to civilians in need.

It is clear that more must be done to ensure full compliance with these obligations.

On this occasion I emphasise once again our firm conviction that UNRWA is a stabilising force in Gaza and in the region, and there is no replacement to the services it provides.



Member States must make sure that UNRWA can implement its operations in line with its mandate, and that relief workers are protected. We call upon member states to continue to contribute to the Agency and ensure that it has the necessary resources to operate.

We continue to observe obstacles being imposed by Israel preventing the safe, rapid, and unhindered facilitation of humanitarian assistance into and within Gaza.

Since the outbreak of this conflict, Israel has obstructed a meaningful humanitarian aid scale-up in Gaza by placing onerous, arbitrary bureaucratic and administrative impediments on aid delivery. Tent poles, chemotherapy drugs, and basic commodities are being blocked from entering Gaza.

Furthermore, it continues to block food from reaching Gazans who are in desperate need. According to the latest data, the entire population of the Gaza strip is facing crisis levels of hunger. Around half a million people are on the verge of man-made and conflict-induced famine.



More needs to be done. We cannot simply wait for a retrospective famine classification before acting to prevent it.

Within this context, we deeply regret that the World Central Kitchen has now been forced to suspend its operations and to return large consignments of undelivered food due to the fear of further attacks.

Malta underlines that Resolution 2417 clearly states that the use of starvation as a weapon of war may constitute a war crime.

We further stress that Israel must facilitate the use of all available routes and border crossings to and throughout the Gaza Strip. The announced opening of the Erez Crossing, the Kerem Shalom opening, and the Ashdod Port is a necessary and positive development. The full and rapid implementation of these measures is fundamental.

We are also deeply shocked by images of the aftermath of the Israeli military's siege on Al Shifa hospital. Any systematic targeting of civilians using hospitals and medical facilities or their improper use by the parties is in direct contravention of international humanitarian law and Resolution 2286.



This resolution as well as all other Security Council resolutions must be respected and implemented.

Finally, Malta reiterates its firm position that de-escalation and dialogue are the only ways to allow the necessary space to relaunch negotiations for a just, comprehensive, and peaceful resolution of this conflict based on the two-State Solution along the pre-1967 borders.

I thank you.