



Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, 24 April 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Darren Camilleri, Political Coordinator,
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I begin by thanking Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator Ms. Sigrid Kaag for her informative briefing.

Four months after the adoption of Resolution 2720, we regret that there has been no meaningful increase in the scale and predictability of the UN's humanitarian response in Gaza.

Malta once again demands the immediate implementation of relevant resolutions of this Council, regarding the need for an urgent ceasefire, the release of all hostages, and the facilitation of desperately needed humanitarian aid into and throughout Gaza.

In the face of such dire humanitarian conditions, Malta is deeply dismayed by the unjustified blockade of aid into, and throughout, Gaza.



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Famine has grasped the north of the strip, and the rest of the population is now the most food insecure in the world.

Over 34,700 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza. The vast majority of them are women and children. Furthermore, and as recalled by the Secretary-General, reports continue to emerge on the use of deadly experimental AI targeting systems to devastating effect in Gaza.

Last week, the Council also met to discuss the irreplaceable nature of UNRWA. There can be no meaningful aid response in Gaza without the agency.

We have also taken note of the final report regarding the Agency's neutrality, which determined that UNRWA has in place significant mechanisms to ensure compliance and respond to neutrality breaches, and further welcome the Agency's commitment to implementing the recommendations put forward in the report.

However, this UN agency, and all humanitarian aid in Gaza, continues to be undermined.



In these difficult times, we need to avoid politicising the work of humanitarian actors and undermining the legitimacy of the United Nations in Gaza.

We further reject and condemn the staggering number of humanitarian and UN staff killed by Israel during this conflict to date. Thorough and transparent investigations, leading to accountability, are critical in all instances.

The established humanitarian notification and deconfliction system must be respected.

Yet, we see the opposite in the destruction of hospitals and bombing of aid convoys. We also echo the call of the Secretary General for a credible and independent investigation into recent reports of mass graves at the Nasser hospital in Khan Younis and at the Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City.

The Provisional Orders of the International Court of Justice on 26 January and 28 March, including those regarding the delivery of humanitarian aid into and within Gaza, must be complied with.



While Malta positively notes the ongoing attempts to move aid via alternative routes to Gaza, mainly by air and sea, land access provides the only suitable aid modality that can immediately and comprehensively arrest the humanitarian crisis.

We are encouraged by the promises made by the Israeli government regarding the opening of the Ashdod port and the Eretz crossing for humanitarian aid. We reiterate our call for this *goodwill* to be retained and strengthened in order to address the devastating situation on the ground.

While we recognise the eight World Food Program trucks which have entered via the port in the last number of days, the volume is insignificant when compared to humanitarian needs, what was called for, and what was promised.

Israel must do much more to abide by its legal obligations as a UN Member State, a party to this conflict, and an occupying power. This includes opening those crossings to allow for the safe passage of aid into and throughout Gaza.



The UN must be allowed to scale up their response in Gaza in a meaningful and principled manner. Aid delivery must not form part of political negotiation.

In conclusion, we reiterate our support for the work of the UN, Ms. Kaag, and her team.

Malta will continue to underline the need for a massive aid scale-up to address the needs of those who are suffering the ongoing catastrophic conditions within Gaza.