



Security Council briefing and consultations on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question [2720], 2 July 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Mr Darren Camilleri
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Thank you, President, and I also thank Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for her briefing and her efforts.

Resolution 2720 sought to address the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. It is gravely alarming that nine months into the conflict, the conditions in the Strip remain dire and continue to deteriorate.

Since 7 October, more than 37,000 people have been killed as a result of the Israeli military operation, with countless others wounded. 75% of Gazan population has been internally displaced, the majority on more than one occasion. Nearly the entire population is facing high levels of food insecurity, with concerning reports detailing the use of starvation as a method of warfare. Children continue to bear the brunt of this war.



Israel's continued and expansive military operation into Rafah has further compounded existing risks for civilians and debilitated the humanitarian response. This includes through the seizure of the vital Rafah crossing, which remains inoperative.

The implementation of the relevant Council resolutions and the full, immediate, and effective implementation of the Orders of the ICJ remains essential.

The obligation to ensure the unimpeded and safe delivery of humanitarian aid into and throughout Gaza, including through the lifting of all barriers to the provision of humanitarian assistance on a large scale, remains paramount.

We are encouraged to note from Senior Coordinator Kaag's briefing that the 2720 mechanism is now operational and contributing to improving coordinated efforts for aid delivery into Gaza. We maintain that land routes remain the most feasible and effective way to ensure that unprecedented levels of aid now enter the Strip.



It is troubling that fuel shortages issues persist, hindering aid operations and the function of critical civilian facilities such as water, health and sanitation, increasing risks of communicable diseases in rising summer temperatures.

Commercial goods must also be prioritised as the people of Gaza cannot depend on aid alone.

Furthermore, Malta is deeply concerned at reports of increased challenges for aid distribution within Gaza due to rising insecurities, including lawlessness, criminality, and looting. This deterioration on the ground places significant strain on the UN and its partners in continuing their respective relief efforts.

As demanded for in resolution 2720, and in accordance with international humanitarian law, United Nations and humanitarian personnel must have robust assurances for their safety and security.

Last week's killing of an MSF staffer is another tragic demonstration of the high price humanitarians and health workers continue to pay, with impunity.



All parties must fully respect and utilise the deconfliction mechanism. Independent investigations into all killings of UN and humanitarian staff must also be held.

Furthermore, the work of the UN must not be politicised. UNRWA is an irreplaceable actor, without which there can be no meaningful comprehensive aid operation in Gaza. It is operating under extremely difficult conditions and it is crucial that the international community ensures the Agency receives the required funding and support.

President

As we sit in another meeting on the situation in Gaza, we cannot risk normalising this state of affairs. This persistent despair cannot become the inherent status quo for Palestinian civilians and the hostages still held captive by Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. On this note, we reiterate our call for the immediate and unconditional release of all remaining hostages.



Malta reiterates its call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire. We urge both Hamas and Israel to accept the terms of the proposal outlined in resolution 2735 and to put an end to further human suffering.

This is the only way to allow for the significant flooding of aid into and across Gaza. It would also allow the space for a massive recovery and reconstruction efforts necessary.

Crucially, a ceasefire will bring us a step closer towards a vital political horizon. It is a fundamental requirement for the realisation of the two-State Solution and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

I thank you.