



Security Council briefing on the Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question, 31 July 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Ms Francesca Gatt

Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Thank you President, and I also thank USG DiCarlo for her briefing.

Malta remains deeply concerned with the escalations during the past 48 hours in the Middle East.

The killing of 12 children in Majdal Shams in the occupied Golan Heights is shocking and must be condemned.

Developments in Iran and Lebanon have the potential to spark further conflict and plunge the region into even greater despair.

We reiterate our call on all parties to exercise restraint, prioritise de-escalation, and to pursue peaceful solutions to all disputes. All remaining hostages must be unconditionally released, and all parties must understand that extrajudicial executions are illegal under international law.



Following the horrific 7 October attacks by Hamas and other armed groups, the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza rages on. This has given rise to a dire humanitarian situation in Gaza. Civilians and individuals protected under international law, including UN personnel, humanitarian workers, and journalists, continue to be risk their lives.

The prospect of a full-blown regional conflict remains worryingly present. It would lead to a crisis of untold proportions in the region, hitting the most vulnerable, women and children in particular. This is simply unacceptable.

Malta has consistently called on all parties to concentrate efforts towards preventing a regional spillover.

The most effective way to achieve this is for all sides to accept the fact that widespread conflict and the death of civilians is not in anyone's interest. Efforts towards an immediate and permanent ceasefire to the Israel-Hamas conflict in Gaza must not cease.



Towards this end, it is imperative that Hamas and Israel accept and implement the ceasefire proposal outlined in Security Council resolution 2735.

We deeply regret that the latest developments and the escalating violence only undermine this and move us further away from this common goal and we call on all parties to reduce tensions.

President

All parties to the conflict must fully comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law. This includes the paramount obligation to protect civilians in the course of hostilities, including in the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. We condemn the loss of any innocent civilian life, and reiterate our call on all actors to pursue all possible actions to protect civilian lives.

Accountability for any violation of these obligations must be equally prioritised.



The implementation of all relevant Council resolutions, including Resolutions 2712, 2720, and 2728, and the full, immediate, and effective implementation of the Orders of the ICJ remains essential.

In conclusion, it is only through the prevention of a regional conflict that we can restore a credible political horizon to address the situation in the Middle East.

This political horizon must be centred towards the comprehensive realisation 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 and internationally agreed parameters.

I thank you.