



Security Council briefing and consultations on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question [2720], 16 September 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Her Excellency Ambassador Vanessa Frazier
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Thank you, President, and I also thank Ms Kaag for her briefing.

The adoption of Resolution 2720 represented a glimmer of hope for the people of Gaza last December, and we are truly appreciative of Ms Kaag's tireless efforts over the past eight months.

Unfortunately, the situation on the ground remains beyond desperate. Despite endless appeals by the international community, military tactics are still being used to deny essential services to the Gazan population. It is heart wrenching to see the people of Gaza suffer acute hunger, with famine conditions affecting over a million people.

80 per cent of the population has faced repeated evacuation orders, complicating the vanishingly insufficient aid delivery taking place.



Entire communities have been crammed into so-called humanitarian zones, which are regularly targeted by the Israeli military.

Markets, schools, mosques, churches, hospitals, health clinics, roads, water mains, and electricity lines have been destroyed. Over 70,000 tonnes of explosives have been dropped on the Strip in the past 11 months. The official death toll stands at 41,000 killed and 95,000 wounded.

President

It is deeply troubling that those who are dedicated to assisting the most vulnerable are at risk of becoming targets themselves in Gaza and the West Bank.

Less than two weeks ago, a clearly marked WFP convoy in Gaza came under fire from the Israeli forces.



On 9 September, a fully notified and deconflicted UN convoy carrying 12 staff members for a polio vaccination campaign was rammed with tanks and bulldozers, and shots were fired.

On 11 September, an UNRWA school in Nuseirat that was sheltering 12,000 people was struck by missiles. 34 people lost their lives, including six UNRWA workers.

This incident is the latest in a long line of attacks that have, this year alone, resulted in the deaths of around 200 UN and humanitarian staff in Gaza. The repeated targeting and intimidation of the United Nations in Gaza is deeply concerning.

President

If there is to be any cessation of this destruction and unabated violence in Gaza, we, the members of this Council, must demand and ensure the full implementation of Security Council resolutions, adherence to international law, and accountability. Countries with influence over the parties must also continue to strive to bring this bloodshed to an end.



The full and immediate implementation of the ICJ provisional measures orders is an essential first step, particularly as they relate to the unhindered facilitation of humanitarian assistance and the cessation of attacks against the civilian population.

We stress that humanitarian assistance must never be up for negotiation. It is a legal obligation enshrined in the Geneva Conventions and its Additional Protocols. States providing military support must also ensure that their armaments are used in a manner that is consistent with IHL.

President

As we approach the one-year mark in this dreadful conflict, this Council must not reduce itself to simply commenting helplessly on this catastrophe.

I repeat: a permanent ceasefire is needed without further delay. Nevertheless, this would just be the first step out of this nightmare.



The road after that will still be an even more arduous one. Yet, although we still cannot see the light at the end of this dark tunnel, peace must never be regarded as an unattainable goal.

On the contrary, we must never give up. We must redouble efforts to make sure that once this conflict is over, we lay the foundations to secure a just and lasting peace.

A peace based on 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.