



Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, 27 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 the Secretary-General for his briefing.

From the start of this conflict, Malta's call has been consistent, unequivocal, and clear: only a permanent and immediate ceasefire in Gaza will provide the necessary environment for de-escalation.

We therefore remain gravely alarmed by the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and beyond. This has resulted in unimaginable devastation and displacement, often on multiple occasions, for countless civilians. Unfortunately, the outlook remains bleak.

Nevertheless, accepting the status quo is not an option. We fully support the ongoing diplomatic efforts by US, Egypt, and Qatar towards achieving a ceasefire. This Council and the international community too, have a critical role to play.



Meanwhile, 101 hostages are still held captive by Hamas, forced to endure unimaginable conditions for almost a year. They must be released immediately and unconditionally, and reunited with their families and loved ones.

At the same time, the humanitarian needs of the civilian population in Gaza are immense. More than 41,000 Palestinians, the majority of whom are women and children, have been killed. Israel's continued strikes continue to render the entire strip uninhabitable.

While the UN is working tirelessly to prevent a polio epidemic, the health crisis has only deepened. Compromised hospitals suffer crippling shortages of fuel and medicine, all as acute levels of hunger persist.

As children worldwide start their scholastic years, schools in Gaza continue to be attacked. The ongoing insecurity, including attempts to use educational facilities for non-education purposes, deprives children of their safety and access to education.



Additionally, the dignity, safety, health, and rights of women and girls have been gravely undermined. They face a multitude of threats and hardships, including those due to rampant lawlessness and criminality within desperate communities.

It is unacceptable that international humanitarian law, including the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, and international human rights law, continue to be flagrantly disregarded.

We further reiterate that Israel has the responsibility to provide adequate, unimpeded access for humanitarian aid into and across the Gaza Strip, including through opening all crossings.

President

Malta is also gravely concerned that the situation in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is quickly edging towards catastrophe. This cannot be allowed to occur. It would extinguish any remaining hope for peace.



Civilian death and destruction caused by Israeli military operations and escalating settler violence, combined with demolitions, forced displacement, and intimidation, are rendering conditions unliveable for Palestinians.

We reiterate that settlement activity is illegal under international law and undermines the contiguity of a future Palestinian state.

In line with the ICJ Advisory Opinion of 19 July, and the General Assembly resolution adopted last week, Israel is under an obligation to end its unlawful presence in the occupied Palestinian territory as rapidly as possible.

President

As the world continues to witness unprecedented regional suffering, which is now also alarmingly spilled over into Lebanon, the latest news coming out of the country is deeply concerning and we are monitoring developments closely. We stress that further escalation will not lead to a resolution of this conflict.

We call on all parties to exercise utmost restraint, and to de-escalate the situation through diplomacy and the agreement of a sustained ceasefire.



This is the only path which will allow us to rebuild a necessary political horizon 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.