



## Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, 9 October 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Her Excellency Ambassador Vanessa Frazier  
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Thank you, President, and I also thank Ms Lisa Doughten from OCHA and UNRWA's Commissioner-General Lazzarini for their briefings.

Today's meeting marks a grim milestone for this Council.

One year has passed since the terrible 7 October attacks by Hamas in Israel, in which over 1,200 people were killed. One year since Israel launched its devastating military campaign in Gaza, which has killed at least 41,600 people, injured countless more, and decimated the Gaza Strip.

One year of captivity, uncertainty and fear for the hostages who are still held by Hamas. Unending suffering for the thousands held in Israeli administrative detention sites.



Over this past year, this Council has held countless meetings and has adopted four resolutions. These remain woefully unimplemented, and the situation continues to deteriorate.

This is personified by the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza.

Civilians are subject to unimaginable hardship and repeated displacement, deprived of essential access to health care, shelter, food, electricity, and the lifeline of humanitarian aid.

Tragically, children have suffered the most.

Subject to unspeakable violence, which will have a marked effect on their psychological wellbeing.

Deprived of adequate food, affecting their physical development.

Denied the right to education, losing an entire year of schooling. Schools, once a safe haven, still suffer continuous strikes.



Hospitals, health care workers, and places of worship, have also become targets of systematic attacks.

These actions represent a grave assault on the principles we stand for. Malta once more stresses that international humanitarian law must be adhered to. Military force must not be used to target civilians and civilian infrastructure.

The full and immediate implementation of the ICJ's Orders on provisional measures is essential. We underline that all Member States are bound by international law, as reflected in the recent Advisory Opinion of the ICJ on the legal consequences arising from Israel's policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.

Malta condemns the fact that humanitarian efforts, vital to survival, face repeated obstructions and attacks.



As we have just heard from Commissioner-General Lazzarini, more than 220 UNRWA personnel have been killed in the past year, making it the highest death toll for the UN in its history.

We are extremely concerned with the latest news regarding the Knesset legislation being adopted against UNRWA. The Agency operates out of a decades-old General Assembly mandate and is an irreplaceable actor for humanitarian efforts in the occupied Palestinian territory.

This legislation risks compromising its ability to provide lifesaving assistance. Its inability to work in the region, including in the West Bank, will have devastating consequences. We call on these actions to be reversed, so that Palestinians may continue receiving the support they desperately need.



More broadly, attacks against the United Nations, including measures directly targeting the Secretary General, do not contribute to an improvement of the current desperate situation.

President

The untenable and immoral nature of this situation is painfully clear. However, the path out of this catastrophe, and towards peace, is also clear.

An immediate and permanent ceasefire, in-line with Council Resolution 2735, must be agreed. The hostages must be released, and Israel must allow humanitarian aid to flow unhindered into Gaza, through all possible crossings.

The fighting must stop. States with influence over all sides of this conflict must exert it in the direction of peace.



Gaza is the eye of the storm of conflict raging across the Middle East. Elsewhere in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the situation in the West Bank remains of grave concern. The worsening situation, including settler violence and increase in settlement building, undermines the achievement of the two-State Solution.

We need to ensure that de-escalatory efforts and diplomacy are prioritised to ensure ceasefires in both Gaza and Lebanon. This Council has the responsibility to decisively act towards this end.

This approach will allow us to work for a credible political horizon and the irreversible realisation of the two-State Solution, in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions and internationally agreed parameters.

It is only this path which will guarantee peace for Israelis, for Palestinians, and for the wider region.

One year of war is a year too many – we cannot afford to delay peace any longer.

I thank you.