



## Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, 25 November 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Darren Camilleri

Deputy Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

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Thank you, President. I also thank Deputy Special Coordinator Mohammed Hadi for his sobering briefing.

Malta remains deeply concerned about the ongoing war in Gaza, and the unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe it has fomented. Civilians continue to suffer, as the prospects for peace grow ever dimmer.

We deeply regret that this Council's efforts to adopt a resolution to end these hostilities were once again vetoed last week. We said it on that day, and we will say it again. The draft resolution co-penned by the E10 represented the bare minimum of what is needed to begin to address the desperate situation on the ground.

We reiterate our unequivocal demand for an immediate, unconditional, and permanent ceasefire across Gaza and the broader region.



We also reiterate our demand for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas and other armed groups since the horrific terror attacks of 7 October.

It is equally crucial that a ceasefire be accompanied with unhindered and sustained humanitarian access to deliver aid at the scale required to address the population's critical needs.

Following the developments of recent days, as a firm and committed supporter of the ICC, Malta will abide by its obligations as a party to the Rome Statute.

President

Gaza continues to be subjected to incessant bombardments by Israel. This dire situation has been exacerbated by the denial of humanitarian aid. Basic and essential food and health systems have collapsed, and widespread displacement and catastrophic living conditions are prevalent. The risk of famine in North Gaza grows with each day that humanitarian aid is denied.



Malta urges Israel to lift all restrictions hindering humanitarian aid from being distributed into and throughout Gaza, and calls for the immediate restoration of humanitarian access.

The forced displacement of civilians, including women and children, must end, and all efforts should focus on facilitating the return of civilians to their homes.

Moreover, Malta unequivocally condemns all targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure. All parties must uphold the principles of international law, including international humanitarian law. In this vein, we stress that attacks targeting humanitarian workers and UN personnel are unacceptable.

In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, settlement expansion, settler violence, and the dispossession of Palestinian communities continue. This further destabilises the region, entrenches the illegal occupation and undermines the prospects for a two-State solution. We call on Israel to reverse these actions, and to respect and abide by international law.



Irresponsible calls for the annexation of the West Bank by some Israel officials and inflammatory rhetoric on the status quo of the Holy Sites are resurfacing, adding more fuel to the fire. Such actions would also be in violation of international law.

We recall the ICJ Advisory Opinion of 19 July that clearly stated that Israel's presence in the occupied Palestinian territory is unlawful and must end as soon as possible.

Malta condemns any attempts to abrogate the 1967 agreement between Israel and UNRWA, or to obstruct the Agency's capacity to implement its mandate. We call upon Israel to rescind these legislative actions. The Agency is irreplaceable in providing essential support to Palestinian refugees and ensuring regional stability. UNRWA is the last remaining lifeline for many Palestinians. It must be strengthened, and its personnel protected.

Without significant de-escalation and a re-establishment of a credible political framework, Israeli-Palestinian peace will remain elusive.



Malta urges parties to rapidly de-escalate and fully recommit to diplomacy, including on the gravely worrying situation along the Blue Line and in Lebanon. Those with influence on the parties must exert it in the direction of peace.

An effective political framework must be accompanied with support for a revitalized Palestinian Authority which integrates Gaza and the West Bank, and makes part of a sustainable recovery plan for Gaza.

The key to durable peace lies in the fulfilment of Palestinian aspirations for statehood and self-determination, while also ensuring robust guarantees for Israel's security.

In conclusion, Madame President, Malta remains steadfast in its commitment to a credible and irreversible two-State solution, along the pre-1967 borders, and in line with Security Council resolutions and internationally agreed parameters. This is the only viable path to a just and lasting peace.

I thank you.