

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 23 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council**

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefings provided by Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General; Mr. Khalil Shikaki, Professor of Political Science and Director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research; and Mr. Daniel Levy, President of the US/Middle East Project, as well as the statements delivered by His Excellency Mr. Miguel Berger, State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, and by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Indonesia, the Niger, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference on the agenda item entitled “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question”, convened on Tuesday, 21 July 2020. A statement was also delivered by the representative of Israel.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members for this video-teleconference, the following delegations and entities submitted written statements, copies of which are also enclosed: Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brazil, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, the European Union, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, the League of Arab States, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

Pursuant to the letter by the President of the Security Council addressed to Permanent Representatives of Security Council members dated 7 May 2020 (S/2020/372), which was agreed in light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, these briefings and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Christoph Heusgen  
President of the Security Council



## Annex 1

### Statement by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov

I brief the Security Council today as Palestinians and Israelis are grappling with a complex and potentially destabilizing three-pronged crisis: first, an escalating health crisis, as both struggle to contain the rapid spike of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases; secondly, a spiralling economic crisis, as businesses close, unemployment soars, protests increase and the economy suffers the financial impact of months of lockdowns and restrictions; and, finally, a mounting political confrontation driven by the threat of Israeli annexation of parts of the occupied West Bank and the steps taken in response by the Palestinian leadership.

Those developments are not happening in a vacuum. The unfolding dynamics have shed a stark light on the daily reality of the conflict and the imperative to resolve it through negotiations between the parties. They have further exposed the unsustainability of the occupation and the need to update agreements that define the relationship between the two sides in the interest of peace.

In recent weeks, the region and the broader international community have continued to express their firm rejection of annexation. Among these, on 1 July, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom published an op-ed in a leading Israeli newspaper expressing his opposition to annexation and asserting that such a step would violate international law and run “contrary to Israel’s own long-term interests.” Two joint statements issued on 7 July — one by the Foreign Ministers of Egypt, France, Germany and Jordan, and the second by Foreign Ministers of nine Arab States and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States — stressed their staunch opposition to the move and called for a return to negotiations based on United Nations resolutions and international law.

On 2 July, leaders from Fatah and Hamas held a rare joint video press conference in an effort to restate their opposition to annexation and to commit to a unified Palestinian front against it.

Palestinian and Israeli women are also making their voices heard. On 9 July, I engaged with some 100 Palestinian women in a high-level dialogue organized by UN-Women, marking the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). Participants shared their deep concern and uncertainty in the face of both COVID-19 and annexation threats. Ten Palestinian women leaders, supported by 180 women, issued a joint appeal against annexation, calling for the right to live in a democratic State of their own — in freedom, dignity and equality.

A separate appeal issued by 22 Israeli women leaders, and later signed by more than 100 others, highlighted that annexation plans pose an irreversible danger to Israelis, Palestinians and regional stability. Responding to both initiatives, 45 global women leaders signed a joint call against annexation and for peace, highlighting the importance of heeding women’s voices in situations of conflict.

The Secretary-General and the United Nations will continue efforts to resuscitate a dialogue among all stakeholders, with no preconditions, and in the interest of peace and a negotiated resolution to the conflict. For those efforts to stand a chance of success, there must be political will from all parties. Otherwise, the path to a negotiated solution risks quickly becoming unnavigable, moving instead towards a one-State reality of perpetual occupation and conflict.

Regrettably, the situation on the ground is rapidly being affected by the dramatic increase in COVID-19 cases in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel.

To contain the pandemic, the Palestinian Authority (PA) has re-imposed movement restrictions across the West Bank, as well as some closures in the worst-hit governorates. Israel has also re-imposed limitations on gatherings and certain non-essential businesses, as well as lockdowns in specific areas. Movement between Israel, the West Bank and Gaza remains heavily restricted, and the Rafah crossing, between Gaza and Egypt, has been closed in both directions since 15 May.

The challenge of confronting the rapid increase in cases in the West Bank and boosting prevention efforts in Gaza has been significantly compounded by the ending of coordination between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Israel. The PA's refusal to accept any clearance revenues transferred by Israel has exacerbated an already concerning fiscal crisis and impacted service provision. It has effectively blocked the ability of patients to travel from Gaza for treatment outside of the Strip and has led to delays in delivering humanitarian assistance and materials intended for the COVID-19 response and other health-support and services.

In response, the United Nations has engaged with all sides to ensure the continued and unimpeded provision of humanitarian assistance. Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 crisis, the Organization has reached an agreement with the PA to make exceptions for coordinating humanitarian deliveries, and with Israel to streamline its administrative procedures. I want to thank the authorities for their openness and cooperation with the United Nations on these challenges. Nevertheless, I am also concerned that we are far below the level of coordination that existed in the beginning of the year, when the first wave of the virus hit, which could have serious repercussions on the ability to control the spread of the virus and mitigate its impact on people's lives.

Over the past weeks, because of the unprecedented circumstances, the United Nations has offered to increase its role as an intermediary between the parties, including in the COVID-19 response and in the facilitation of patient referrals from Gaza. Nevertheless, there are limitations to what the United Nations and other organizations can be expected to do. Any such increased responsibilities should be limited and time-bound, and not designed to replace the roles and responsibilities of the Palestinian Authority or the Government of Israel.

While the COVID-19 pandemic and the breakdown in cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian authorities have raised new concerns and complicated the speedy transfer of patients outside of Gaza, it is important to recognize the long-standing, underlying fragility of Gaza's own health-care system.

On the economic side, the Palestinian Ministry of Finance announced on 2 July that it would pay partial Government salaries for the month of May. The May salary payments were delayed due to an 80 per cent reduction in Palestinian revenues resulting from the economic impact of COVID-19 and from the PA's refusal to accept the monthly transfers of its clearance revenues. It is unclear whether the Palestinian Government will have sufficient resources to make any future salary payments or, indeed, to continue to carry out its governing functions in the coming months.

The suspension of coordination between the PA and Israel has also impeded the ability of Palestinian security forces to move through Areas B and C of the West Bank, thus undermining their capacity to enforce COVID-19-related restrictions.

During the reporting period, daily violence continued throughout the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Overall, the Israeli security forces killed one Palestinian. In addition, 65 Palestinians, including 10 children, and two Israeli soldiers were injured in various incidents.

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza organized protests against Israel's plan to annex parts of the West Bank. Overall, those protests remained peaceful. On some occasions, Israeli security forces used rubber-coated bullets and tear gas, declared closed military areas and set up checkpoints near protests.

On 9 July, Israeli security forces shot and killed a 34-year-old Palestinian man and shot and wounded a 17-year-old Palestinian in the central West Bank village of Kifl Hares. Israeli security forces released a CCTV video allegedly showing the two throwing Molotov cocktails towards a military patrol and soldiers opening fire in response.

Meanwhile, settlers perpetrated some 13 attacks against Palestinians, resulting in nine injuries and damage to property, about half the number of such incidents recorded during the previous month.

There were also some 25 incidents in which Palestinians threw stones or Molotov cocktails at Israeli-owned vehicles, injuring seven Israeli civilians, including one child, and causing damage to property.

In Gaza, while the relative calm continued, Palestinian militants fired five rockets towards southern Israel. One fell short inside Gaza, one was intercepted by the Iron Dome system and the others hit in open areas in Israel, causing no injuries or damage. On all occasions, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) carried out retaliatory strikes against Hamas targets, including underground infrastructure in the Strip, with no injuries reported. Over the month, militants also test-fired an unusually high 69 rockets and mortars towards the sea, with 44 projectiles launched on 1 and 3 July alone.

Economic tensions brought out dozens of Palestinians on 5 July, who demonstrated in front of the Palestinian Legislative Council in Gaza City against the deteriorating situation, poverty and unemployment.

In the past month, the Israeli authorities demolished 48 Palestinian-owned structures due to a lack of Israeli-issued building permits. Another five structures were self-demolished by their owners following the receipt of demolition orders. Of the buildings demolished, 39 were in Area C and 14 in East Jerusalem. Consequently, 34 people, including 17 children and 10 women, were displaced, and over 250 people were otherwise affected.

I note that the latest information available from Israeli authorities indicates that, as of 31 May, the number of Palestinian detainees, including minors, in Israeli prisons is at its lowest level in years. The number of Palestinian minors in Israeli prisons has declined by some 30 per cent — from 201 in February to 142 in May. While still too high, I welcome that development, particularly in the light of the recent calls to release detainees and reduce their numbers during the COVID-19 crisis.

Turning briefly to the region, the economic situation in Lebanon continues to deteriorate, with inflation rising as the Lebanese lira falls against the United States dollar. As the health and education sectors come under increased stress, and with growing concerns over food insecurity, the Government and the International Monetary Fund remain engaged in talks over a potential assistance package. In parallel, Lebanon has witnessed a spike in daily COVID-19 infections, with 2,542 confirmed cases as of 15 July.

The situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) remained mostly stable, notwithstanding several instances of weapons being pointed between the IDF and the Lebanese Armed Forces along the Blue Line. On 2 July, under COVID-19 restrictions, the UNIFIL Head of Mission

and Force Commander chaired a tripartite meeting attended by senior delegations of the Lebanese Armed Forces and the IDF to prevent tensions along the Blue Line.

On the Golan, while generally calm, the situation remained volatile, with continued violations of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement. On 15 July, the Alpha side informed the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) that they had eliminated a position within the area of separation that they believed was a violation and a threat. UNDOF did not observe that activity but did observe an explosion in the area of separation consistent with the report from the Alpha side.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that confronting the current crises requires unity of effort, strength of purpose and a clear understanding of the multifaceted risks we are facing. The ferocity of the COVID-19 virus and its devastating human and economic toll demand extraordinary measures — measures that must rise above politics as usual. Immediate efforts to curb the virus and to mitigate its impact must be prioritized.

Israeli and Palestinian leaders have a duty to protect the lives and livelihoods of their populations. With unemployment in Israel surging to over 20 per cent, and with thousands of Israelis taking to the streets to demand greater financial support from their Government, many have highlighted the staggering financial and, potentially, human cost of moving forward with potential annexation plans. I reiterate the Secretary-General's call on the Israeli Government to abandon plans to annex parts of the occupied West Bank.

With an 80 per cent reduction in its income, the Palestinian Authority faces the risk of a total collapse at a time when Palestinians throughout the occupied territory need the services and support of their Government more than ever.

I call on both sides to work with the United Nations in ensuring that the forms of civil and security coordination that are vital to preventing the continuing spread of the coronavirus are reinstated immediately. That should be done without prejudice to the political position of either party. It is necessary to do that in order to protect lives in the face of rapidly growing infection rates. We will continue to work with all sides to ensure that humanitarian and health needs are met.

For the United Nations, protecting lives will always remain our highest priority. The complexities of the pandemic also require us to examine how we arrived at this pivotal and destructive point in the history of the conflict and what it will take to reverse the current course.

Last week, I spoke with representatives of Palestinian and Israeli civil society organizations engaged in peacebuilding efforts. Their resilience, creativity and commitment to a peaceful solution are deeply inspiring and we, in the international community, would do well to follow their lead.

Today, however, it is not enough to restate our opposition to annexation. Today we should discuss what can and must be done to improve the situation on the ground, preserve the prospects for a two-State solution, increase the chances of meaningful negotiations for a peaceful resolution of the conflict and protect these efforts from spoilers, radicals and extremists. To this effect, I reiterate today the Secretary-General's call to the members of the Middle East Quartet, the Arab countries and the Israeli and Palestinian leadership to urgently re-engage. We need to restart diplomacy.

Over these past years, these types of discussions have been dormant for too long, allowing both parties to move further apart along diverging paths. Unilateral action and the threat of unilateral action have made the goal appear ever more distant. Only by engaging together on the basis of shared principles and aspirations can we

identify realistic steps to avoid increasing polarization and advance the goal of two States, living side by side in peace, security, mutual recognition — and integrated into the region. We must use the opportunity presented by the current crises to move forward to regain the path towards a negotiated two-State solution, built on a just and sustainable resolution to the conflict in line with relevant United Nations resolutions, bilateral agreements and international law.

## Annex 2

### **Statement by the President of the U.S./Middle East Project, Daniel Levy**

I would like to thank the Security Council and the German presidency for giving me this opportunity to brief the Council today.

As of today, there has been no further Israeli annexation on the West Bank. That does not translate into this being a moment for self-congratulation — we should keep the champagne on ice. Refraining from de jure annexation must of course carry no reward; avoidance of criminality is normative, not prizeworthy. De jure annexation would exacerbate and accelerate existing negative trends. But whether it happens or not, annexation is a symptom of a deeper crisis: the permanent denial of freedom, rights and equality to Palestinians. The annexation focus also ignores and neglects the 2 million Palestinians in Gaza living under permanent conditions of inhumane enclosure. The collective challenge is not just how to prevent annexation, but how to address occupation and these deeper entrenched structural problems.

The peace process as currently framed and pursued offers a place of refuge from hard choices, a comfort zone where the law of diminishing returns has a lock hold. It has brought us to the brink of annexation, and the Palestinian Authority to the precipice of financial collapse. It is not a question of trying harder or of resuming negotiations. More of the same guarantees further deterioration; it is a failure of learning, politics and imagination. We must look not to quick fixes but to creating the conditions and the building blocks for future progress that can deliver equality, dignity and security for Palestinians and Israelis alike. This is not a conflict of two equal parties pursuing equally destructive unilateral actions. Focusing primarily on the Israeli side reflects the relationships of power and of an occupying party whose actions pre-eminently determine outcomes on the ground.

I would therefore humbly propose the following items for the consideration of this body.

First, with regard to accountability, if the unlawful and peace-negating policies of Israel continue to be met with impunity, then there should be no expectation of positive change. It is that simple. Israel pursues policies in violation of international law and United Nations resolutions because it can; no tangible cost or consequence is attached. Rhetorical condemnation unmatched by real accountability and sanction invites derision. While it should be costly, the occupation has become cost-free for Israel.

Secondly, with regard to rights, human rights and international legality should be our guiding star and no longer be subordinated to maintaining a peace process that has so palpably failed to deliver. That means, for instance, supporting Palestinian and Israeli human rights defenders, backing serious investigations into grave human rights violations, including at the International Criminal Court, and prioritizing a permanent ceasefire to protect civilians, in particular in Gaza and southern Israel. To place issues of human rights and international law front and centre is not to hark back to the stale and boring; it is to insist on the timeless and necessary. That includes the right to be free from anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

Thirdly, the two-State outcome is not an infinitely elastic concept. There is no “State-minus”, which is tantamount to continued occupation. A plan that empties the yet-to-be established State of all attributes of sovereign statehood cannot offer a path to peace. Pre-emptively normalizing regional relations with Israel while occupation continues is to indulge maximalism.



Fourthly, going beyond partition, and given the gap between what is necessary for a genuine two-State outcome that could emerge by mutual consent and what is the reality on the ground as dictated by Israel, it might be necessary for members of this body to consider, alongside expressing a preference for two States, acknowledging a readiness to engage with other ideas so long as any alternatives respect one irrevocable standard, namely, full enfranchisement and equal and democratic rights for all those who are within the political and physical space in question. In 1947, it was the United Nations that determined in favour of partition. However, there were majority and minority positions and even an abstention. I would draw the Council's attention to the prospect of the partition question needing to be revisited in the not-too-distant future.

Fifthly, with regard to values, we should also look to nurture shared values of equality and humanity in navigating a way forward. For instance, we should try to understand and mutually engage with the experience and dispossession of Palestinian refugees, on the one hand, and with the Jewish impulse for a shelter of last resort, on the other hand. At this time where historic issues of racial justice have belatedly come to the fore, and as we mourn the death of American civil rights leader John Lewis, it is important to remember the many Palestinian and Israeli voices that have stood up for and continue to stand up for justice and equality. As a recent example, I would urge Council members to look at an essay by American-Jewish intellectual Peter Beinart entitled "A Jewish case for equality in Israel-Palestine" and to consider the mobilizing and liberating power now — today — of a narrative of equality over separation — of dignity over real estate — whatever the eventual political dispensation.

As some of the options I mentioned are examined, Israelis should be more, not less, engaged. There should be wide-ranging discussions with different sectors of Israeli society, including those supportive of the existing trajectory and those dissenting from it. Similarly, there should be engagement with the varied Palestinian constituencies, both inside and outside the occupied Palestinian territories, as well as with Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel.

Finally, and as is evident from this briefing, the Palestine-Israel situation is going through a quite profound transition, as indeed is our global geopolitical system. The call of Secretary-General Guterres to avert a great fracture and maintain a universal system should be strongly supported, alongside the Secretary-General's recognition that the coronavirus disease pandemic has underscored the need for a strengthened and renewed multilateralism, as well as his call to re-examine long-standing assumptions and reconsider approaches that have led us astray. It would send a strong signal if this body were to explore, together with the Secretary-General, a mechanism to assess and evaluate its record and effectiveness on Israel-Palestine and to examine convening a commission or other appropriate vehicle to appraise anew approaches to resolving this long-standing conflict with its attendant debilitating effects.



## Annex 3

### **Statement by the Director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, Ramallah, Palestine, Khalil Shikaki**

My daily job for the past 27 years has been to measure the pulse of the Palestinian and Israeli streets. This is one of those confusing and depressing moments for the two societies. Palestinians are witnessing the crushing of their dream of one day seeing the end of the Israeli occupation of their land and the building of their own independent and sovereign State. Last month more than three quarters did not believe that a Palestinian State would be created in the next five years. Most are torn between insisting on their national aspiration for decolonization and building a State of their own, on the one hand, and their recognition, on the other, that that aspiration is no longer feasible because of the grim reality on the ground, where Israeli settlement expansion is destroying, day by day, the chance for peace based on partition. Many Palestinians, particularly youth — driven not only by this reality, but admittedly also by a high degree of discouragement given our own domestic shortcomings — have come to embrace a one-State solution, one in which democracy rules — a one person, one vote system for all Jews and all Palestinians — indeed, a struggle for equality. The trend over the past decade is unquestionable: support is gradually tilting in favour of one State.

In their search for the means to regain freedom and dignity, Palestinians are also torn between the desire to fight by all means, including armed struggle, to end the Israeli military occupation, on the one hand, and their own responsibility, on the other, to put food on the table for their own families, particularly under the current conditions created by the coronavirus crisis, especially in the Gaza Strip. Support for violence, which declined to less than a fifth during the early days of Oslo, began to rise five years ago and has now reached almost half the population. The most recent spike was triggered over the past six months by the release of the Trump plan and the annexation dynamics it triggered.

Most Israelis have come to the same conclusion: that settlement expansion is making the two-State solution less and less practical. They conclude that such an outcome means greater violence in the future of the two peoples, as well as greater questioning of their State's identity as Jewish and democratic. However, a main difference between the two societies lies in the fact that Palestinians feel too weak and abandoned, not only by the international community but also by their own Arab brothers, and the Israelis, who are much more comfortable with the status quo, feel they can get away with doing what they want with few consequences because the United States and recent history shield them from sanctions.

Unlike in the past, when they demanded full justice, Palestinians today are content with what international legitimacy provides. But this legitimacy is now under attack, not only from Israel but, most important, from one of the main architects of the modern international system. The designers of the Trump plan do not hide their disdain for international legitimacy: their own point of departure is to embrace the views of the most extreme and fundamentalist segment of Israeli society — those who represent less than a third of the Israeli public, according to the joint Palestinian-Israeli surveys that we have been conducting with colleagues at Tel Aviv University since 2016.

With a lethal combination of political expediency and national-religious messianism, the Trump plan destroys much of the progress made over the past 50 years in resolving the conflict. If implemented, it will create a one-State solution in which Palestinians are denied their basic right to elect those who set the important

rules by which they are governed. It is an invitation to greater discrimination, transfer and violence in the Palestinian-Israeli future.

The Trump plan and its annexationist corollary send the message to Palestinians and Israelis that the two-State solution is out of reach, perhaps dead and buried. According to our surveys, the Palestinian consensus is not only to reject that plan but to also see it as the means by which to take the conflict back to where it started — to its existential roots. Annexation and the Trump plan are not at all about national self-preservation for the Jewish people; it is not surprising that at least half of the Israeli public is not rushing to embrace it.

Because of the despair and pessimism about the future, our joint Palestinian-Israeli surveys show that public opinion on both sides is not a force for peace. At the same time, however, our findings clearly show that the two publics are not an impediment to peace. With the right leadership and the right incentives, the two publics could be brought to support a detailed identical vision of peace based on a real — not make-believe — two-State solution.

In conclusion, replacing a rules-based international system with one based on greed and Evangelical Christian religious myths is a threat not only to us, the Palestinians, but also to all members of the Security Council. It is definitely the responsibility of our own leadership to address our shortcomings, division and lack of reconciliation, our inability to find our way back to democracy, good governance and elections, and our inability to work jointly with our Arab partners and the international community to put forward a detailed counterplan for a vision for peace. Nonetheless, the Security Council and its members who are still committed to international law — the defenders of international legitimacy — should not hide behind our shortcomings to evade their own responsibility to stand up to the Trump and Netanyahu Administrations and protect the norms and rules of the international system. After all, protecting that system is the Council's *raison d'être*.

**Annex 4****Statement by the State Secretary at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, Miguel Berger**

I would like to thank our invited briefers, Mr. Levy and Mr. Shikaki, for sharing with us their observations and assessments. Their research into the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and their thorough knowledge of public opinion reminds us that both sides strive for a life with dignity and security.

The coronavirus disease crisis is significantly affecting the lives of both Israelis and Palestinians. Be assured that we stand by the side of both peoples. We are convinced that, particularly now in this time of crisis, we need more willingness to cooperate from both sides, not less.

Our briefers cited voices that call into question whether we can still speak of a peace process 26 years after Oslo. Yet their briefings underscore that the negotiated two-State solution remains the only viable solution to the conflict and that it still enjoys public support. It meets Israeli and Palestinian security needs, fulfils legitimate Palestinian aspirations for statehood, ends the occupation, resolves all permanent-status issues and guarantees equal rights for all inhabitants based on international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

It is true that we keep repeating this message. We reiterate it because it reflects our strong conviction and firm commitment to the rules-based international order, to the security of Israel as a Jewish and democratic State and to the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and statehood. We reiterate it because it remains the only viable, if not the best, framework for a truly negotiated solution.

We are alarmed by the stated intention of the Israeli Government to annex parts of the occupied West Bank. If implemented, this would constitute a violation of international law, including of the Charter of the United Nations and of Security Council resolutions, irrespective of the size of the territory affected and the terminology used.

Annexation would severely undermine, if not render impossible, the resumption of direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. Instead, it would bring them closer to a one-State reality. Annexation would also have fundamentally negative implications for regional security and stability.

While the European Union wishes to intensify and deepen its cooperation with Israel, annexation would have consequences for the close relationship between Israel and the European Union and its member States. This would probably also have implications for the prospect of further normalization and deepening of Israel's relations with Arab States — a positive process, which we very much welcome.

Since his visit to Israel and Jordan in June, Foreign Minister Heiko Maas has continued his diplomatic engagement to strongly advise against the implementation of any unilateral measures; he did this most recently in a video-teleconference with the Foreign Ministers of Egypt, France and Jordan, in the so-called Munich format. We believe that exchange between European and Arab States on regional security matters is crucial. Promising proposals have already been made, including in connection with the Arab Peace Initiative, on which we can build. Together, we seek to re-establish a constructive agenda and engagement between the parties.

This requires, first, a resumption of direct and meaningful negotiations between the parties. For this to happen, we would need flexibility and openness on all sides. We believe that reactivating the Middle East Quartet would be the best

format option to discuss the way forward. We reiterate our full support for the efforts of Special Coordinator Mladenov.

Secondly, we call on Israel to end the expansion of settlements, including in critical areas around Jerusalem, the confiscation of Palestinian land and the demolition and seizure of Palestinian-owned structures, which often leaves families homeless in harsh times.

Thirdly, both sides need to fully implement resolution 2334 (2016), with regard to settlement activities, as well as all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terrorism, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric. Germany condemns all attacks on, and threats from, Hamas and other terrorist groups against Israel.

Fourthly, intra-Palestinian reconciliation, reuniting Gaza and the occupied West Bank under a single Government, renewing the democratic legitimacy of Palestinian institutions and strengthening governance and responsiveness to the needs of the Palestinian population are also key for achieving a two-State solution.

What I have outlined are the building blocks for a positive agenda. I would like to ask the Council, and the parties, to consider them. Such an agenda would open much needed space for dialogue. Unilateral measures would close it. Let us work together and turn this situation around.

Germany aligns itself with the statement submitted by the Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations on behalf of the European Union (annex 28).

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**Annex 5****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve**

Belgium aligns itself with the written statement submitted on behalf of the European Union (EU) (annex 28).

I would like first to thank Special Coordinator Mr. Nickolay Mladenov for his briefing. I also thank Mr. Daniel Levy and Mr. Khalil Shikaki for sharing their insights with us today.

Last month, an overwhelming majority of the Security Council took a clear stance against the stated intention of the Government of Israel to annex parts of the occupied West Bank, considering that to do so would be an illegal act.

Indeed, a unilateral decision formalizing an annexation, regardless of its size, would constitute a flagrant violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter strictly prohibits the acquisition of territory by force. Such an act would be considered null and void and could not change the status of the West Bank, which will remain occupied territory; nor will it change Israel's obligations as an occupying Power under international humanitarian law, and, more specifically, the Fourth Geneva Convention. In line with the EU's position, we will not recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders, including Jerusalem, other than those agreed upon by the parties through direct negotiations. We will also continue to distinguish between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967.

Annexation would have far-reaching consequences. First, it would risk gravely imperilling the security situation on the ground, including Israel's security, which is not negotiable for us. Secondly, pursuant to our obligations under international law and EU law, annexation would have an impact on the bilateral relations between Belgium and Israel. It would also inevitably have significant consequences for the relationship between Israel and the European Union.

Furthermore, we are deeply concerned that annexation would lead to the intensification of human rights violations and a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the occupied territory, including through the potential imposition of a two-tiered system of unequal political, social and economic rights based on ethnicity.

Finally, annexation would undermine all efforts aimed at restarting negotiations and would mean the end of the two-State solution. We therefore urge Israel once more to refrain from any unilateral decision that would imply a *de jure* or a *de facto* annexation of any part of the occupied West Bank, and we call on the international community to take a strong stance against any such a decision.

At the moment, the threat of annexation is already exacerbated by the destruction of Palestinian-owned residential, livelihood-related or essential-service structures in Area C of the West Bank, while humanitarian aid is also being destroyed for similar arbitrary or unlawful reasons. We are deeply concerned about this destruction, as well as the recent announcements of construction plans in Har Homa and Givat Hamatos. If put into practice, these plans would further detach East Jerusalem from the West Bank and jeopardize the future of Jerusalem as the shared capital of both Israel and Palestine. We call on Israel to abandon these plans.

It is more than ever time for the parties to turn away from unilateral actions and declarations and engage in direct and meaningful negotiations. In this regard,

we stress the importance of intra-Palestinian reconciliation and the necessity of holding elections once conditions permit.

The peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be an important driver for peace and stability in a volatile region. It is therefore necessary that the international community redouble its efforts with a view to achieving a just and durable peace that is rooted in international law, including the resolutions of the Security Council. Belgium will support all efforts in this regard, including in the framework of the Middle East Quartet.

Allow me, in conclusion, to voice Belgium's strong support for the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the crucial role the Agency plays in the absence of a durable political solution to the conflict.

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**Annex 6****Statement by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Zhang Jun**

I thank Special Coordinator Mladenov for his informative briefing. I also thank Mr. Shikaki and Mr. Levy for their presentations.

Over the past few months, the international community has been following the situation in Palestine with growing concern. It is very unsettling that the planned annexation may provoke a new round of tensions and put the Middle East peace process in jeopardy.

The international community has been loud and clear in voicing its rejection of annexation. During the open video-teleconference in June (see S/2020/596), the Secretary-General warned the Council that we were at a watershed moment. As he put it, the annexation would constitute a most serious violation of international law. China shares his sentiment and supports his call for abandonment of the annexation plans.

China is also deeply concerned about reports of the plan to annex part of the occupied Palestinian territory. Such a plan, if implemented, will seriously violate international law and relevant United Nations resolutions and imperil the two-State solution. We urge the relevant party to refrain from taking any unilateral actions and to do its best to de-escalate conflict and tension. It is also our firm position that no country should support unilateral actions.

It is equally imperative to stop settlement activities, the demolition of Palestinian structures and violence against civilians. The Security Council should discharge its mandate and play its part to ensure that its decisions, including resolution 2334 (2016), are fully implemented.

It is a critical moment to advance the Middle East peace process and resume equal and meaningful peace talks between Palestine and Israel.

International agreements, such as relevant United Nations resolutions, the land-for-peace principle and the two-State solution are important parameters in the Middle East peace process. They embodied the wisdom and hard work of several generations and should be observed and implemented.

China supports President Abbas's call for an international peace conference and an enlarged multilateral mechanism for peace and will positively consider participating in appropriate ways.

It is important for us to heed the voice and concerns of the Palestinian people as well as countries in that region. We call on the international community, especially countries having influence on Palestine and Israel, to remain impartial and just in promoting peace talks.

We should never lose sight of the humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and the hardship the Palestinian people are suffering. The continued blockade of the Gaza Strip has aggravated the humanitarian situation on the ground. The suspension of bilateral agreements and coordination in response to the annexation plan have brought about consequences felt by ordinary Palestinians. In addition, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic further added to Palestine's economic and social fragility.

We commend United Nations agencies, including the World Health Organization and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), for helping Palestine to address the humanitarian challenges. We



call on the international community to provide more support to Palestine, including through UNRWA. We also call for the prompt lifting of the blockade on the Gaza Strip.

China is a sincere friend of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people can always count on China's support to their just cause to restore legitimate national rights. During a phone call with President Abbas yesterday, President Xi Jinping reiterated China's firm support for Palestine's just demands and for the two-State solution, as well as all for efforts conducive to resolving the Palestine question.

President Xi also assured President Abbas that China will continue doing what it can in providing material and technical support, and continue implementing the projects conducive to advancing Palestine's economy and improving people's livelihood.

To help Palestine in the fight against COVID-19, we have provided medical supplies and sent a team of experts to Palestine. We will soon deliver our financial contribution of \$1 million to UNRWA and, through UNRWA, provide personal protective equipment to Palestinian refugees in Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

The Middle East is now at a crossroads between peace and turbulence. Shouldering the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council should and must stand with peace and justice, with righteousness and conscience, and play its active role in bringing about a comprehensive, just and enduring solution to the Palestine question.

## Annex 7

### Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations

We thank Special Coordinator Nikolay Mladenov for his briefing on the current situation in the region. We also thank Mr. Daniel Levy and Mr. Khalil Shikaki for their presentations.

The Dominican Republic reiterates its deep concern regarding the Israeli-Palestine conflict, the current prospects of further destabilization and the enormous potential consequences for the civilian population. The continuing trends of conflict in the occupied Palestinian territory, as well as the worsening deterioration of the humanitarian and socioeconomic situation there, exacerbate the level of uncertainty about the future of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

Dialogue is the only fundamental way to improve the lives of people affected by the conflict and to move forward with firm steps towards sustainable development — one that is based on justice, equal opportunities and a peace that can be replicated throughout the Middle East. Such dialogue needs to lead to the immediate cessation of all actions that contravene international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law, and United Nations resolutions. But, above all, it needs to be people-centered, prioritizing the health, dignity, security, freedom and well-being of a population hit by years of violence and conflict.

As an international community, we need to understand that our collective action must be aimed at contributing in an impartial and effective way to the search for real solutions to a conflict that so often endangers the lives of so many civilians. We need to move forward and reduce any empty demagogic diligence.

The situation in Gaza continues to be of high concern for the Dominican Republic, as it is for others. We all know the long-standing dire situation of the health system, particularly in the Gaza Strip. And now, with the global coronavirus disease pandemic, its collapse is imminent.

As stated by the Secretary-General, the challenges in Gaza ultimately require political solutions and the political will to pursue them. All acts of violence by any of the conflicting parties, including discrimination and displacement, have a particular impact on women, and notably on those in the marginalized Palestinian territories. Therefore, the Dominican Republic calls for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all actions leading towards peace, including the centrality of the disproportionate impact of violence on women and girls.

Turning to the current situation on the ground, we are saddened by the deaths of seven Palestinians, including one child, involving the Israeli Defense Forces during demonstrations, clashes, security operations and other incidents across the occupied Palestinian territories. We also remain concerned about the number of Palestinian children killed or maimed and the disruption of children's education due to air strikes and rockets, as recently indicated in the Secretary-General's report of the on the matter. This is unacceptable.

For children, the impact of such an environment is too often profound. Children are exposed to experiences that shape attitudes for a lifetime and have lasting psychological consequences. We therefore urge Israel and the State of Palestine to continue working with the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict and make concrete and honest commitments to prevent and end grave violations against children.

In conclusion, we reaffirm that meaningful and fair dialogue around the numerous current obstacles that threaten the two-State solution must continue without delay and on the basis of international consensus. The Dominican Republic will stand with both parties in their efforts towards that end. But we believe that Palestinian national unity and Israeli political will need to precede any meaningful dialogue. Both countries' political leadership need to realize that the only way forward for Palestinians and Israelis is to negotiate their way out of this long and painful conflict and forge their own paths towards lasting peace for present and future generations.

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**Annex 8****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Gert Auväärt**

I would like to thank Special Coordinator Nickolay Mladenov, Mr. Daniel Levy and Mr. Khalil Shikaki for their briefings.

First, Estonia would like to express its solidarity with the Israeli and Palestinian people in the fight against coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Unity and solidarity are even more important during this challenging time, and we underline the importance of continued cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian authorities to tackle the pandemic.

Estonia remains committed to a negotiated two-State solution based on internationally agreed parameters and relevant United Nations resolutions, taking into account the legitimate aspirations of both parties and Israeli security concerns. We have taken note of the announcements on the readiness of the Palestinian Authority to resume peace negotiations as well as the counterproposal submitted to the Middle East Quartet. It is now essential that both parties take steps towards resuming direct and meaningful negotiations to resolve the final-status issues and achieve a just and lasting peace. We also urge the regional and international players, including the Middle East Quartet, to continue efforts towards those negotiations.

Estonia calls on the parties to refrain from any unilateral steps that would undermine the efforts towards peace. A possible annexation by Israel of parts of the occupied West Bank would undermine the prospects for a negotiated two-State solution and threaten the stability of the region. We are also concerned about Israel's continued settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territories, including in East Jerusalem. Furthermore, we are concerned about the announcement by the Palestinian leadership with regard to the suspension of agreements with Israel, including in the area of security cooperation. We call on the Palestinian Authority to reconsider this decision.

Both parties must prevent all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, incitement or provocation, as called for in resolution 2334 (2016). We condemn the continued firing of rockets from Gaza towards Israel and any other form of violence targeting the civilian population. An escalation of violence would be negative for all sides and further undermine the prospects for a resolution to the conflict and the common fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

We encourage all Palestinian factions to work towards reconciliation. This would enable them to address common challenges and the needs and expectations of the Palestinian population; it is essential for reaching a two-State solution. Also, in order to engage in direct negotiations, both parties need Governments with legitimate and democratic mandates. We therefore strongly encourage Palestinians to announce elections.

I would also like to reiterate the important role played by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the region, in particular its efforts to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Palestinian refugees. Estonia will continue supporting the work of UNRWA.

Finally, I would like to state that Estonia aligns itself with the statement submitted by the delegation of the European Union (EU) on behalf of the EU (annex 28).

**Annex 9****Statement by the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nicolas de Rivière**

[Original: English and French]

I thank the Special Coordinator, Mr. Levy and Mr. Shikaki for their briefings.

France supports the statement submitted by the delegation of the European Union (EU) (annex 28).

Because it impacts the stability of the region, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains a subject of prime importance. The parameters of its settlement are well known: two States, living in peace and security, along secure and recognized borders, with Jerusalem as their respective capitals. It is not only a question of law but also of pragmatism: only the two-State solution will respond to the aspirations of the Palestinians and guarantee Israel's security, with which France will never compromise.

In this context, France reiterates its appeal to Israel to abandon any plan to annex parts of the West Bank, whatever the perimeter. As the overwhelming majority of Council members recalled last month, any annexation would constitute a clear violation of international law (see S/2020/596). It would be a flagrant violation of the international order, whose rules we have together established, starting with the Charter of the United Nations, which enunciates the principle of refraining from the acquisition of territory by force.

Any annexation of territory would also deal an irreversible blow not just to the peace process but also to the two-State solution. It would strengthen the enemies of peace, to the detriment of efforts to achieve regional peace and guarantee Israel's security. Annexation would not be in the interest of either Israelis or Palestinians. France will not recognize any modification to the June 1967 lines, except those agreed by both parties, in accordance with international law, the resolutions of the Security Council and the internationally agreed parameters on which the two-State solution is based.

As the EU High Representative has said, any annexation decision would have consequences for the European Union's relationship with Israel. French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Yves Le Drian also indicated that such a decision could not go unanswered in view of its seriousness. It is therefore the responsibility of the Council to remain mobilized to prevent any such decision.

France also expresses its deep concern about the continuing colonization in violation of international law. In particular, France calls on Israel to put an end to the expansion of settlements in Givat Hamatos and in Area E-1, which are particularly sensitive with regard to the viability of the two-State solution. The planned opening of the bidding procedure for the construction of more than 1,000 housing units in Givat Hamatos and the continuation of the procedure for the construction of 3,500 housing units in Area E-1 are worrisome in this regard. France is also concerned about the continuing demolitions, confiscations and evictions in Area C and East Jerusalem, despite the fact that the Israeli authorities committed themselves to suspending demolitions due to the coronavirus disease.

Together with its partners, in particular Arab and European partners, France is determined to continue to work towards the resumption of credible and ambitious negotiations between the parties, based on international law, the resolutions of the Security Council and internationally agreed parameters. It is up to the parties, with

the support of the international community, to negotiate the concessions necessary to move forward on the path to peace.

The conflict will not be resolved through unilateral decisions. The path to peace will be long and difficult. It will require courageous political decisions. Progress towards inter-Palestinian reconciliation would be an important step in that direction.

In conjunction with its Arab and European partners, France is ready to play its full part in this process. On 7 July 2020, the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany, Egypt and Jordan jointly reiterated the importance of resuming a fruitful dialogue between the Israeli and Palestinian parties. They also offered their support to facilitate progress in the negotiations.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm France's full support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and to call for a surge of mobilization to enable the Agency to overcome its financial crisis and continue to implement its full mandate.

**Annex 10****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Dian Triansyah Djani**

Let me first thank the German presidency of the Security Council for convening today's timely and important meeting. We concur with what Ambassador Matjila of South Africa said yesterday at the Nelson Mandela commemoration, when he reminded us once again of Mandela's message of freedom. I also thank Special Coordinator Nickolay Mladenov and the other briefers — Mr. Daniel Levy and Mr. Khalil Shikaki — for their important and insightful contributions.

We are gathered once again to express our great concern about the situation in Palestine and Israel's formal annexation plan. This concern is being loudly expressed by various members of the international community, including parliaments, civil society and The Elders. These voices are united in denouncing the Israeli plan, which would destroy the fundamentals of the peace process, inflict adverse impacts on millions of Palestinians and destabilize the region and beyond. The voice is clear, and the message is explicit.

For now, the implementation of the formal annexation may seem to be on pause, but the occupation continues. Nonetheless, the Palestinian suffering is real and deep, and it is never on pause. On that note, let me focus my statement on three pertinent points.

First, we urge Israel to abandon its annexation plan. The pause in formal annexation is not good enough. With the uncertainties surrounding the annexation plan, one thing remains certain: any form of annexation is illegal and harmful. Annexation is an act that flagrantly violates international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, the Fourth Geneva Conventions and various United Nations resolutions. Israel's continued pursuit of such a policy is a direct challenge to the very principle of the international rules-based order that the United Nations was founded on.

Annexation is also harmful. It destroys any prospect for peace. It will put millions of Palestinian families in peril, further destabilize an already volatile region and create an unpredictable future, not only for the Palestinians but also for the Israelis. Mr. Levy reflected on five important elements, and I would stress that the current situation reflects the permanent denial of freedom, rights and equality for Palestinians.

Secondly, we call for all parties to restart the negotiations process. The outpouring of support for the Palestinians and the condemnation of Israel's annexation plan need to be translated into action, because words without actions bear consequences and will neither prevent annexation nor end the occupation. We would like to echo Special Representative Mladenov's points on restarting diplomacy. Indonesia urges the international community to mobilize support for a resumption of credible multilateral negotiations, guided by the internationally agreed parameters, with the aim of implementing the two-State solution. We welcome every effort initiated by the Secretary-General, together with the Special Coordinator, towards engaging and opening talks and finding a fair and sustainable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Thirdly, we call upon all parties to ensure access to humanitarian assistance. Our fight against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is far from over. The number of positive cases and casualties is surging, including in Israel and in the occupied Palestinian territories. The looming annexation and the COVID-19 pandemic add significant burdens to Palestinians, who have suffered decades of occupation,



increasing demolitions and displacement, as well as constant deteriorating living conditions. The uncertainties surrounding the annexation do not change the fact that all parties need to ensure access to humanitarian assistance in the occupied Palestinian territories, as well as health services and the movement of goods and people. In this regard, I appeal for continued support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

It is now more important than ever for the international community to fully deliver on its commitment to supporting the Palestinian people and bring their suffering to an end. I would like to add what Mr. Mladenov mentioned in his briefing (annex 1), namely, the need for unity of effort, strength of purpose and a clear understanding of the multifaceted risk. The risk, peril and suffering of the people of Palestine and their children make the possibility of a grand future seem bleak.

My country's support of the Palestinian cause has been consistent and an integral part of Indonesia's foreign policy. We will continue with our policy position until Palestine establishes a contiguous independent State within the pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. We reiterate that it is the obligation and solemn duty of the Security Council not only to stop Israel's vicious annexation plan but to ensure that Palestinians receive the justice that is their right and for which they have suffered and waited for so long.

## Annex 11

### Statement of the Permanent Mission of the Niger to the United Nations

A month ago, in this very place, Secretary-General Guterres and Special Coordinator Mladenov sounded the alarm that Israel's plan to annex parts of the West Bank "grievously harm the prospect of a two-State solution and undercut the possibilities of a renewal of negotiations" (*S/2020/596, annex 1*) and "would have serious implications in terms of ... the prospects of a negotiated, sustainable peace" in the region (*ibid., annex 2*). Such a prospect, about which we all had a legitimate reason to worry in view of its imminent realization, would certainly have put an end to all hopes.

And yet, since 1967, the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, the parties themselves and the international community as a whole, have made efforts to pave the way to the peace that we have been seeking for nearly 70 years, a peace that necessarily involves the abandonment by Israel, the occupying Power, of the annexation of the Palestinian territories and the destruction of Palestinian homes, with their attendant violence and deprivation of all kinds.

In the briefings that we have just followed with great attention, Mr. Nicholas Mladenov, as usual, gave us, without complacency, the picture of the situation on the ground (annex 1), which is quite worrisome, to say the least. I thank him for that. I also thank Mr. Daniel Levy and Mr. Khalil Shikaki for their briefings on the situation in the Middle East and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (annexes 2 and 3, respectively).

Now more than ever, it is time for us to give hope to the peoples of the Middle East so long exposed to the torments of instability, violence and war. These populations, mostly young, many of whom are women, whose genius extends beyond the borders of this region, deserve our solidarity and our unwavering support.

The current grave situation triggered by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic compels us individually and collectively to show ingenuity and a greater sense of solidarity. It is this reality that, a few months ago, prompted the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to overcome their differences and build cooperation to respond effectively to the consequences of the pandemic for their respective peoples.

With its devastating effects, the pandemic has added to an already complex health situation, with a lack of adequate medical equipment and products and a disastrous economic situation induced by a blockade on the Gaza Strip, thereby increasing the vulnerability of the Palestinian people. We therefore rightly commend all countries that have shown great generosity by agreeing to contribute to the financing of the United Nations COVID-19 intervention programmes as well as the daily activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East on the ground.

In conclusion, it is incumbent today on the Security Council, the Quartet and the international community to spare no effort to exploit this glimmer of hope, however small, with a view to relaunching the Israeli-Palestinian peace process on the basis of universally accepted ideals and principles, in particular through resolution 1515 (2003), which enshrines the two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security and in strict compliance with the 1967 borders, as the basis for resolving the conflict.

Was it not Mr. Ban Ki-moon who stated in his time that

“[t]he path out of the current political deadlock requires commitment, compromise, mutual respect and leadership on both sides. It also requires the acceptance — demonstrated by deeds as well as words — that the two-State solution is the only road to peace” (*S/PV.7673, p. 4*)?

These words are still relevant today.

**Annex 12****Statement by the First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Dmitry Polyanskiy**

We welcome you, Sir, as President of the Security Council. We thank Special Coordinator Nickolay Mladenov for his briefing, and we listened carefully to Mr. Daniel Levy and Mr. Khalil Shikaki.

The situation in the Middle East remains in the spotlight owing to numerous conflicts and crises affecting peoples and countries of the region. Unfortunately, the underlying problems persist. Even more concerning is the fact that generally crises are either provoked from outside or complicated by external interference. That is compounded by the conviction of those who interfere that they know how to solve a particular issue while trying to promote one-sided approaches. The opinions of local populations and tribal, ethnic and religious groups are often ignored. The core principles of international assistance for overcoming crises are being twisted. The international community, and the United Nations in particular, should help countries to break deadlocks, prevent conflicts and render mediation efforts. Our starting point should be the principle of doing no harm.

The Palestinian question is central to the entire Middle East. We have passed the date of 1 July, after which the Israeli Parliament threatened to begin discussing plans for the annexation of the West Bank of the Jordan River. No action has yet been taken, but it is important to understand that the implementation of those plans may close the door for the prospect of a two-State solution and only exacerbate the situation. We see no alternative to two States — Palestine and Israel — peacefully coexisting. In that regard, we reaffirm the call to abandon provocative actions and unilateral steps. International cooperation and joint steps must accompany the Middle East peace settlement. At the same time, we note again that the whole range of final-status issues should be resolved in direct negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis. Such negotiations should be launched as soon as possible.

As a permanent member of the Security Council and of the Quartet of international mediators, Russia is ready to undertake efforts in the interest of reaching a settlement within the internationally recognized parameters — all the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative — which provide for the creation of an independent, sovereign and territorially contiguous Palestinian State within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. We urge our partners in the Quartet — the United Nations, the European Union and the United States — to intensify their collaborative efforts. We are also ready for dialogue with key regional players, with the facilitation of the Quartet.

Apart from those fundamental issues, it is important not to forget about daily challenges — the continuation of settlement activity, the demolition of Palestinian property and eviction of Palestinians, ongoing clashes and the threat of missile launches on Israeli territory. The coronavirus disease multiplied those problems, which can only be overcome collectively. We share the ongoing concern about the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. The work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the international community's support of the Agency is needed more than ever. In support of the efforts of our Egyptian friends, we call for Palestinian unity and are actively cooperating with various Palestinian representatives to help them overcome the internal split.

In conclusion, I would like to stress once again that the only viable solution is one reached by both parties through negotiations and based on the internationally recognized principles. No recipe or plan disregarding — let alone clearly

rejecting — that reality can be imposed or become a deal-breaker. We also reaffirm that any attempt to divert the attention of the international community and put the blame on other regional actors, no matter how big and influential they are, will not lead Palestinians and Israelis to a feasible solution to the current situation.

**Annex 13****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Inga Rhonda King**

We begin by thanking Special Coordinator Nickolay Mladenov for his comprehensive briefing. Let me also thank Mr. Daniel Levy, Professor Khalil Shikaki and the representatives of the State of Palestine and Israel for sharing their assessments and perspectives on the evolving situation in the Middle East.

The question of the implementation of the internationally agreed parameters to achieve a just and peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains a significant concern for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. As the situation on the ground has drastically evolved over the past decade, leading to the continued expansion of illegal settlements across the occupied Palestinian territories and the associated threats of annexation, that question has become even more acute.

Recent developments underscore, more than ever, the need to support the people of Palestine. In particular, we remain deeply concerned about the continued demolitions and seizures of Palestinian properties and structures, which, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, climaxed in June to the highest levels since January 2017. In line with resolution 2334 (2016) and other related United Nations resolutions, we condemn the illegal demolition of homes and the displacement of Palestinian civilians. Given the vast humanitarian concerns in the occupied Palestinian territory, which have been exacerbated by the coronavirus disease, we call on the international community and other actors to provide increased funding for the revised inter-agency response plan, which remains underfinanced.

In a positive development, we welcome the Palestinian Authority's willingness to resume negotiations with Israel under the auspices of the Middle East Quartet, with international involvement. We call on the Quartet to engage and step up consultations with the relevant parties and key regional actors in an effort to restart talks in the near term. Despite many setbacks, direct negotiations can bolster the prospects for a negotiated two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and promote lasting peace in the region.

The serious socioeconomic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip necessitates an urgent political solution to facilitate lifting the 13-year Israeli blockade. It is important to note that the delivery of the essential services of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) contributes significantly to the overall well-being of Palestinian refugees, especially the most vulnerable. Consequently, we reiterate our call for the international community to provide UNRWA with the necessary funding so that it can continue providing vital life-saving services, health care and education for Palestine refugees.

Although Israel did not proceed with its annexation plans on 1 July, we are mindful that the threat of annexation has not disappeared. We take this opportunity to stress, yet again, that annexation of any part of the occupied Palestinian territory will constitute a grave violation of international law and undermine prospects for accelerating the Middle East peace process. It is imperative that we collectively work to discourage any possible initiative towards annexation, and to promote the internationally agreed two-State solution. We therefore support the call of President Abbas for an international conference.

## Annex 14

### Statement by the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations, Kais Kabtani

At the outset, I would like to commend the State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, Mr. Miguel Berger, for his able leadership of this meeting. I also thank Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his briefing and tireless efforts.

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council reaffirmed — in its resolutions 242 (1967), 476 (1980) and 478 (1980) — the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force. That prior determination is further reiterated in the Council's more recent resolution 2334 (2016).

Through that seminal resolution, the Security Council made it clear that Israel's establishment of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of a two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. The Security Council and the international community underlined that no changes to the 4 June 1967 lines will be recognized, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations.

It is regrettable and scandalous that Israel, the occupying Power, persists in blatantly disregarding all such legal obligations and all repeated calls by the international community to end its illegal occupation of the Palestinian territory and its aggressive policies and practices against the Palestinian people.

Despite its serious violations of international law, the decades-long impunity enjoyed by Israel, the occupying Power, constitutes one of the major reasons behind Israel's challenge to the universal legal system, translated by its continuing occupation, settlement policies, aggressive and racist practices and, recently, by its imminent threats and declarations on the implementation of its long-planned illegal de facto annexation of Palestinian land.

The international community should stand firm in upholding international law, including the relevant Security Council resolutions, and in strongly rejecting and preventing any such unilateral illegal move, which would constitute an existential threat to international peace and security and to fundamental Palestinian rights.

Given the looming threat of annexation, Tunisia strongly calls upon the Security Council and the entire international community to remain steadfast and engaged in stopping further grave violations of international law, thus preserving the credibility of the entire multilateral system and the prospects for peace.

We continue to believe that the Middle East Quartet, with the support of the Security Council and other international actors, can meet the challenge of preserving the two-State solution and relaunching the peace process based on the internationally endorsed terms of reference and parameters, thus preventing a new cycle of violence and instability in the region.

According to the World Health Organization, the number of people testing positive for coronavirus disease continues to surge in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Tunisia highly values the humanitarian community's efforts to help the Palestinian Authority respond to the pandemic. However, we remain concerned about the likely further increase in cases over the coming weeks. We therefore call



upon the international community to increase its assistance to the State of Palestine, including in support of economic recovery efforts.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East is also facing increased demand for services due to the current global crisis. Additional funds are urgently needed to ensure the continuity of the Agency's essential services. To that end, Tunisia recently announced a symbolic contribution to the Agency's budget in solidarity with Palestine refugees.

In the same vein, Tunisia remains seriously concerned about the dire humanitarian and economic situation in Gaza, exacerbated by the continuing cruel and inhuman blockade by Israel. In his latest report (S/2020/555) on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016), the Secretary-General urged Israel to ease the restrictions on the movement of goods and people to and from Gaza, reaffirming that only by fully lifting the debilitating closures, in line with resolution 1860 (2009), could we hope to sustainably resolve the humanitarian crisis.

In conclusion, we urge the international community to intensify collective endeavours to re-engage the parties in negotiations based on the internationally endorsed terms of reference and parameters in order to put an end to the occupation of Palestinian territory as of 4 June 1967, including East Jerusalem, ensure the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, put an end to its long suffering and guarantee security, peace and prosperity for all the peoples of the region. The international peace conference proposed by President Mahmoud Abbas should be fully promoted since it could constitute a new start towards a more stable and peaceful Middle East.

**Annex 15****Statement by the Chargé d'affaires of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, Jonathan Allen**

I would like to welcome you, Sir, to the Security Council today. I also thank Mr. Mladenov for his briefing and, of course, for the continued efforts he and his team are making on the ground. I also wish to thank our two civil-society briefers, whose statements were very interesting and passionate, for their work. Finally, it is always nice to hear from my good colleagues, the Deputy Permanent Representatives of Israel and the Observer State of Palestine.

As we have heard, this is a fragile and worrisome period. I want to say, first, that we remain deeply concerned about the prospect of annexation. Not only would that be damaging to efforts to restart peace negotiations and run counter to international law, it would also compound the already fragile health and humanitarian situation. Preventing annexation and finding alternative ways for the parties to engage must be the top priority. I reiterate that the United Kingdom will not recognize any changes to the 1967 lines, except those agreed between both parties.

Ultimately, we want to see both sides make meaningful steps towards a just, fair and agreed settlement. As my Prime Minister said to both Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas earlier this month, we want to see Israelis and Palestinians return to the negotiating table. The United Kingdom offers its full support in fostering such dialogue.

Now is the time for Israel to make clear that it will not take any unilateral steps towards annexation. Now is the time for both parties to resume cooperation, particularly in regard to security. And now is the time for the Palestinians to reach out to the United States and to Israel so that we can begin the journey back to negotiations.

In creating the environment of trust needed for dialogue, we call on both parties to avoid further provocative rhetoric or actions. We call for accountability against incitement on both sides and for Israel to freeze all settlement activity, stop demolitions and actively prevent settler violence. The advancement of settlement plans, including in Givat Hamatos, Har Homa and Area E-1, is of particular concern. All settlements are illegal under international law. Settlement construction in those highly sensitive areas threatens to further undermine the viability of a future Palestinian State, with its capital in East Jerusalem.

In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force by the Israeli authorities, as appears to be the case in the killing of the Eyad Falak in May, we expect full, transparent investigations. There must be serious reflection on what causes such use of force to be deemed necessary. Meanwhile, we saw a steady increase in indirect-fire attacks from Gaza into Israel from late May until early July. This shows the very real and unacceptable intent of militant Palestinian groups towards Israeli civilians. Every Israeli and Palestinian has the right to live in peace and security.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) remains a serious and significant threat in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. The cooperation among United Nations agencies, the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel during the first wave was welcomed, ensuring that essential medical supplies and staff were able to access Gaza and the West Bank. Faced with rising numbers of COVID-19 cases, we call on the parties to resume cooperation, while making joint efforts to protect equally both Israelis and Palestinians.

I would like to finish by reiterating once again the United Kingdom's long-standing position on the Middle East peace process. We support a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian State based on 1967 lines with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capital of both States and a just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement for refugees. And the United Kingdom stands ready to support that objective in any way that we can.

## Annex 16

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Kelly Craft**

I thank Nickolay Mladenov for his briefing. As always, we appreciate the hard work performed by him and his team in finding solutions to this conflict. I also thank the other two briefers for their remarks today. While they are certainly entitled to their opinions, I would remind my Security Council colleagues, and those listening today, that that is precisely what much of their remarks were: their opinions.

As Nickolay discussed, we, too, remain deeply concerned about the resurgence of the coronavirus disease in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.

I want to share a tragic statistic with the Council that illustrates the negative impact of perpetual conflict between Israelis and Palestinians and the hopelessness caused by the neglectful and abusive Government in Gaza. In the past six months in Gaza, there have been more than 15 suicides and hundreds of attempts, the majority of the victims under the age of 30. Fifty per cent of close to 2 million people in Gaza are under the age of 18. They deserve a real future, not the path to misery that lies ahead with the current, inept leaders.

Hamas killed and injured hundreds when they seized power from Fatah and the Palestinian Authority 13 years ago. They have instigated violence ever since and, to this day, silence voices of moderation and prospects for peace and prosperity for the Palestinian people.

A number of factors contribute to the desperate situation in Gaza. However, the oppressive rule of a terrorist organization, Hamas, is at the centre. Today Hamas pretends to function as a Government, employing violent intimidation tactics against any chance of a free press, civil society or freedom of expression. Hamas's charter states "there is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad". They are willing to subject the Palestinian people to despair and perpetual conflict to fulfil their violent vision and appease the hegemonic aspirations of sponsors, such as the regime in Iran, than to forge a future of peace and prosperity. Trapped in such a cycle of madness, it is not surprising that the youth in Gaza have lost hope.

What is worse is the prospect that the regime in Tehran is poised to unleash even more misery and bloodshed, not just in Gaza, but in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen, should the Security Council allow the lifting of the arms embargo on Iran. Arguably, this meeting and the meetings on the Middle East in the months to come should be focused on this great threat to peace and security.

We can debate semantics and resolutions, but we must focus on how to instil hope in the young people in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel. The status quo is a failure. We should be discussing how to get responsible Israeli and Palestinian leadership to sit down at the negotiating table.

President Trump introduced his vision for peace to do exactly this, and to give the young people on both sides the opportunity for a prosperous and peaceful future. Some have rejected the elements of our plan, but no one has offered an alternative that is both realistic and credible. In fact, we have seen more discussion of the potential punitive responses against Israel, rather than discussion of productive ways to engage in peace and encourage the Palestinians to come to the negotiating table. Unless we can get the parties to engage directly, young people in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel will continue to suffer.

So, I ask all members, what other options remain at this stage? Should the Council keep meeting, month after month, saying the same things, or are we actually

prepared to contain Iran's sponsorship of Islamic Jihad and Hamas, the creators of chaos and death? Are we ready to create a climate in which Palestinians and Israelis can settle their conflict? There can be no substitutes for direct negotiations between the two parties.

The Security Council must prioritize the pursuit of peace for a better future for Palestinians and Israelis, and that means speaking to the root causes of this conflict and its agitators. That way, we will help the Israelis and Palestinians and people across the Middle East.

**Annex 17****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dang Dinh Quy**

At the outset, I would like to thank Special Coordinator Mladenov for his briefing. My thanks also go to Mr. Levy and Mr. Shikaki for sharing their views.

We remain deeply concerned about the humanitarian challenges facing Palestinians. It is deeply worrisome that the number of daily new cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has been growing substantially since late June. The pandemic is having a severe impact on Palestinian socioeconomic development. Businesses, factories and shops, previously only enough to maintain basic subsistence, have been closed. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are threatened by risks of unemployment and food insecurity. The budget and daily functioning of the Palestinian Authority are on the verge of severe disruption.

We commend the steps taken by the State of Palestine to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and alleviate its impacts. The efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), working closely with the World Health Organization, in the last few months have also been critical in providing medical, hygiene, sanitation and other general support services for the Palestinian people.

Given the mounting challenges, as the risks facing Palestinian communities could be compounded further still by the second wave of infections in the region, we call on the authorities in Israel and the State of Palestine to continue their cooperation with a view to getting the pandemic under control and lessening its devastating impact.

Although tremendous in terms of impact, the pandemic is just one among several deep-rooted concerns of the international community regarding the prospects of Palestinian people. The most serious concern continues to centre on plans by Israel to annex large swaths of the occupied Palestinian territory.

If realized, the plans would exact severe and irreversible impacts on the viability of the two-State solution, as well as on peace and stability in the Middle East region. Such annexation would be a serious violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations and would also run counter to the long-term interests of the Israelis themselves. The announcement of such plans in the last few months has caused much anxiety, rising tension and rhetoric. It is detrimental to the search for a long-lasting solution for the Middle East peace process and exacerbates the dire humanitarian situation that Palestinians have been enduring.

Against that backdrop, it is high time to redouble efforts to defuse tension and resume dialogue. We therefore call on Israel to stop all unilateral actions and abandon all annexation plans. We also call on all other parties concerned to refrain from any unilateral action, use of force or incitement to violence that may complicate the situation or escalate ongoing tensions.

We welcome the recent statement by President Mahmoud Abbas that the Palestinian Authority is ready to resume the long-stalled peace talks with Israel. We express our appreciation for the determination of the Secretary-General and the Special Coordinator in engaging with all related parties to restart dialogue and alleviate Palestinians' hardship. We commend the multiple efforts by various interested parties, including the Quartet, to resume negotiations in a creative and sustainable manner. We call on the international community to step up assistance to the Palestinian people in this time of challenges, including to strengthen budgetary

support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in order to provide adequate and timely humanitarian assistance.

Let me conclude by reiterating once again our full support for efforts aimed at reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through dialogue and negotiation. It is critical to strive to ensure the legitimate interests of the parties concerned, as well as promote peace, stability and development in the Middle East. The only option towards that end is two-State solution.



## Annex 18

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, Noa Furman**

In recent months, the world has come together to fight the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). While these times have presented the international community with challenges, the upcoming months present it with opportunities to reaffirm its commitment to international peace and security, not only in words but in actions as well.

Some have used the pandemic to try to distract from their malicious behaviour. The Iranian regime has continued to be the leading source of instability in the Middle East and proven to be a threat in the region and beyond. Despite a worldwide pandemic that hit the Iranian people especially hard, the regime surged ahead with its aggression.

The Iranian regime has continued to proliferate advanced weaponry. It arms itself and its proxies, in a systematic violation of the arms embargo imposed on it under resolution 2231 (2015) and puts those weapons to use in an effort to destabilize the region. Iran did not waste a moment after signing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and began violating the embargo right away.

The Iranian regime has also threatened to withdraw from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to stop adhering to the few elements of the JCPOA by which they do still abide. These threats should not be taken lightly, as the regime has proven time and again that it should not be trusted to uphold agreements.

For example, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) investigations clearly indicate that Iran has carried out banned nuclear activities at undeclared sites and has never reported their existence or activities. Furthermore, the regime refuses IAEA inspectors access to nuclear facilities.

The Iranian regime cannot be trusted, and it cannot be allowed to obtain nuclear weapons. Preventing this dangerous regime from possessing nuclear weapons must be a priority for the Security Council and the entire international community.

The threat that Iran poses to the region is not limited to the actions it carries out on its own. The Iranian regime is dedicated to forcing a radical and dangerous revolution throughout the region. Central to this strategy are its proxies, which it trains and arms, in violation of the Security Council-imposed embargo. Wherever the Iranian regime's proxies have spread, terror and violence against innocent civilians have followed.

The situation in Lebanon is dire. The COVID-19 pandemic has only amplified the economic crisis and the social unrest in the country. And yet, Hizbullah, true to its title of Iranian proxy, serves the interests of the Iranian regime instead of those of the people of Lebanon. It diverts funds from helping Lebanese people to building an arsenal of weapons. Hizbullah has more than 150,000 missiles and rockets, the majority of which have been transferred from Iran. They are aimed at Israeli civilians and constitute a grave security threat to Israel and the entire region.

One cannot fight COVID-19 and an economic crisis with precision-guided missiles. The Iranian regime and Hizbullah have increased their efforts of converting existing rockets into precision-guided missiles on Lebanese soil. Iran transfers advanced technologies and the components necessary to enable the terrorist organization to manufacture and convert missiles and rockets, so that they have increased range, accuracy and sophistication. The local population is used as a human shield for these illicit activities, once again putting Iranian unlawful interests

before the people of Lebanon. This worrisome development constitutes another blatant violation of resolutions 2231 (2015), 1701 (2006) and 1559 (2004), and should be unacceptable to anyone whose goal is to avoid another conflict in our region.

Hizbullah has also increased its activity in southern Lebanon, where it deprives the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) of its ability to fulfil its mandate. Hizbullah denies UNIFIL access to significant parts of southern Lebanon, arguing that they are private properties, attacks UNIFIL personnel in order to intimidate them and carries out acts of aggression against Israel from UNIFIL's area of operation.

Earlier this month, Ambassadors to Israel of many of the Council members and the troop-contributing countries participated in a briefing on the Israel-Lebanon border. They toured a Hizbullah attack tunnel and saw with their own eyes how Hizbullah has built offensive infrastructure in UNIFIL's area of operation and into Israeli territory, in violation of Israel's sovereignty and of Security Council resolutions.

In Syria, the Iranian Quds Force has been deployed alongside Hizbullah to keep Bashar Al-Assad in power. Over 400,000 Syrian civilians have lost their lives in the civil war, many at the hands of people trained by the Iranian regime and using weapons the regime provided in violation of the embargo.

Yemen is the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. Some 80 per cent of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance, including more than 12 million children. Instead of helping solve the crisis, the Iranian regime exacerbates it.

The regime illicitly provides the Houthis with weapons, in violation of resolutions 2216 (2015) and 2231 (2015). Those weapons were used in the attacks against Saudi targets, as confirmed in the Secretary-General's ninth report on resolution 2231 (2015) (S/2020/531). The illegally transferred arms also help the Houthis put weapons in the hands of their more than 18,000 child soldiers.

In Iraq, Iranian Shiite militias, armed with ballistic missiles obtained in violation of the embargo, violently quash any opposition. As has been made evident by recent events in the country, when Iran increases its presence and its transfer of arms, instability and violence increase, putting civilians at risk. That advanced weaponry I mentioned, freely transported throughout the Middle East and used by armed militias and terrorist groups, poses a strategic threat to the entire region. The Iranian regime spreads its weapons in order to promote instability, and it has not allowed an international pandemic to slow it down, on the contrary.

The coming months present the international community as a whole, and the Security Council in particular, with three tangible ways to promote peace and stability in the region.

The first is to extend the arms embargo on the Iranian regime, which will otherwise expire in October. Thirteen years ago, in response to the regime's reckless and dangerous behaviour, the Security Council adopted resolutions 1747 (2007), 1929 (2010) and, later, resolution 2231 (2015), which placed the essential weapons embargo on the regime. As Iran's actions show, the embargo is more crucial than ever. The Iranian regime is spreading arms across the region, and indeed around the world, causing instability and encouraging violence. Without the embargo, Iran will scale up its military arsenal and acquire a large variety of weapon systems, which it will then transfer to its rogue State and terrorist organization proxies. This will multiply the existing threat that Iran poses and will be disastrous for peace and security in the region and beyond. It is therefore vital that the Security Council renew the embargo and reaffirm its commitment to prevent this destabilizing and dangerous regime from obtaining nuclear weapons.

The second way to promote peace and security in the region is to grant UNIFIL the power and tools necessary to effectively implement its mandate in the upcoming mandate renewal. Hizbullah's actions in southern Lebanon have rendered UNIFIL unable to discharge its mandate. The renewed mandate must reflect the challenges posed by Hizbullah and substantially improve UNIFIL's modus operandi. All the necessary steps must be taken by the Council to ensure freedom of movement for UNIFIL forces and more comprehensive and accurate reporting on the implementation of the arms embargo and of incidents in the area. Steps to ensure that thorough investigations of such incidents must also be taken. Only if these concerns are addressed can the deployment of such a sizable force to the region be justified.

The third way the international community and the Council can promote peace and security in the Middle East in the coming months is by adopting the realistic and pragmatic approach of President Trump's peace initiative. Israel has always and will always work towards building a just and lasting peace with our neighbours. Just as we have done with Jordan and Egypt, we hope to do with our other neighbours.

Israel is committed to advancing President Trump's plan responsibly, while maintaining all of its peace agreements and strategic interests, and in full coordination with the United States. We call on the Palestinians to stop rejecting opportunities for peace and come to the negotiating table.

President Trump's peace initiative is a real opportunity to bring peace and security to the Middle East. It represents a realistic outlook and a pragmatic approach to ending conflict. The international community should urge the Palestinians not to miss another opportunity.

The spirit of the plan should not only be adopted because it is the most realistic path to peace in decades, but because it sends a strong message that needs to be heard throughout the Middle East: rigid positions that do not reflect reality will not lead to peace.

Peace and security cannot be achieved by threatening the other side with resolutions in the General Assembly or the Security Council. It can be achieved only through negotiations and dialogue. By embracing the plan and encouraging the Palestinians to join Israel at the negotiating table, the international community will send a clear message to the entire region: we are committed to ending violence and finding just, lasting and realistic peace.

As the entire world navigates the COVID-19 pandemic, the Middle East must also deal with increasing threats to stability in the region. The coming months present the international community with three opportunities to prove that it is committed to promoting peace and security in the region. The arms embargo against Iran must be renewed, UNIFIL must be granted the tools to discharge its mandate and the spirit of President Trump's peace initiative must be embraced so that realistic and just peace can be reached.

**Annex 19****Statement by the Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations**

We thank the Federal Republic of Germany for the invitation to participate in this debate.

Talking today about the Middle East necessarily leads to considering the announcements regarding Israel's plans to annex occupied Palestinian territories in the West Bank. We urge the authorities of that brotherly country to be guided by the general commitment of all Member States to act in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations.

We recall that the expansion of settlements has been condemned by the Security Council, since it constitutes a violation of international humanitarian law and is a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

For Argentina, the Israeli settlements, as well as any pretense of annexing Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, have no legal validity and constitute a flagrant violation of international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of a general, just and lasting peace based on two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and within secure and recognized borders.

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law, human rights law and international humanitarian law as fundamental pillars of a rules-based international order, Argentina questions any decision that deviates from fundamental principles, such as the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, as recalled in advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice.

For this reason, Argentina reaffirms its determination to support a definitive peace agreement in the region based on international law and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and reiterates that it will not recognize any changes to the lines of 4 June of 1967, including regarding Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations. In this regard, Argentina remains convinced that the only solution is for the parties to sit down to negotiate within the framework of a process that leads to a solution resulting in the emergence of an independent, democratic, viable and territorially contiguous Palestinian State, which lives in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours.

## Annex 20

### **Statement by the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries**

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 120 member States of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Permanent Mission of Germany for its successful presidency of the Security Council this month, and thank it for providing an opportunity for the Non-Aligned Movement to present its position on the question of Palestine, which has historically constituted an issue of concern and vital importance to the Movement.

Having considered the critical developments and deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, in its communiqué on illegal Israeli annexation plans in the occupied Palestinian territory adopted on 15 May, condemned the plans announced by Israel, the occupying Power, to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank, including the Jordan Valley and the land on which it has established its settlements and the wall.

Israel's ongoing settlement colonization of the Palestinian land, including East Jerusalem, and all measures of annexation constitute grave breaches of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, the Fourth Geneva Convention and numerous relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. The Non-Aligned Movement cautions that, if not averted, such plans will have far-reaching and devastating repercussions on the prospects for realizing the rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and independence, the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders and just and lasting peace and security.

NAM calls on the international community to enact serious measures of accountability in the light of Israel's continued non-compliance. This should include the halting of business with the illegal Israeli settlements and the banning of entry to markets of settlement products, among other measures of accountability, in line with international norms and rules, including relevant United Nations resolutions and the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

The Non-Aligned Movement continues to believe that resolution 2334 (2016) provides the most viable path to peace and calls for its full and effective implementation. This resolution sets forth the essential requirements and parameters for the achievement of the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders, in respect of the long-standing terms of reference of peace endorsed by the international community, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions and the Madrid principles, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map.

NAM calls for the cessation of all violations, provocations and aggressions in this regard and for respect for the sanctity of holy sites, rejecting any attempts to alter the historical and legal status quo. NAM also expresses support for Jordan in preserving and administering the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, including the Al-Aqsa Mosque/Haram Al-Sharif and the Hashemite historical custodianship of the holy sites as exercised by His Majesty King Highness Abdullah II ibn Al-Hussein of Jordan. NAM stresses that the Department of Jerusalem's Awqaf and Al-Aqsa Mosque Affairs of Jordan is the sole and exclusive authority to administer Al-Aqsa Mosque/Haram Al-Sharif.

The Non-Aligned Movement demands once again that Israel abide by resolution 497 (1981) and withdraw fully from the occupied Syrian Golan to the borders of 4 June

1967, in the implementation of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The members of the Non-Aligned Movement condemn the statement made by the President of the United States of America on 21 March 2019 regarding the occupied Syrian Golan, as well as the subsequent unilateral and arbitrary proclamation on recognizing the Golan Heights as part of Israel, and call upon the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility by clearly condemning this provocative statement and proclamation. We reiterate the call on the Security Council to uphold its duties, implement its resolutions vis-à-vis the question of Palestine and act urgently to address Israel's annexation plans, which threaten regional and international peace and security.

The Non-Aligned Movement commends the efforts of His Majesty King Mohammed VI as Chair of Al-Quds Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation. NAM welcomes the call for Al-Quds/Jerusalem, signed in Rabat on 30 March 2019 by His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco and His Holiness Pope Francis, to stress the important role that Al-Quds/Jerusalem plays as a city of tolerance and mutual respect among the people of the three monotheistic religions and stresses the need to preserve its specificities and its features as a city of peaceful coexistence.

In the light of the continuously deteriorating humanitarian and socioeconomic situation of the Palestinian people, including the Palestine refugees, challenged even further by the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the members of the Movement express deep appreciation for the invaluable work done by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, including its essential emergency assistance provided to help Palestine refugees to confront the COVID-19 pandemic. We urge once again sufficient and predictable funding of the Agency to enable the continuity of its operations, in line with its General Assembly mandate, and encourage support for the Agency's core programme budget, as well as for the United Nations COVID-19 response plan for the occupied Palestinian territory and the COVID-19 flash appeal for Palestine Refugees.

In conclusion, the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms its abiding solidarity with the Palestinian people, as well as its unwavering support for their just cause, and renews its commitment to further supporting, strengthening and coordinating the international efforts to achieve a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects, including for the plight of the Palestine refugees based on resolution 194 (III). We express our sincere hopes that, this year, we will witness tangible progress in the heroic quest of the Palestinian people to attain justice and fulfil their inalienable rights and legitimate national aspirations, including their right to self-determination, freedom and independence in their sovereign and independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital. This will most certainly open a new chapter for regional as well as global peace and stability, a goal strongly supported by our Movement and one that requires urgent international action to avert the looming dangers and salvage the prospects for a just and lasting peace.



**Annex 21****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations, Jamal Fares Alrowaiei**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, I would like to thank the delegation of Germany for holding this important meeting to discuss issues related to the Middle East. I also wish to commend your delegation, Mr. President, on its skilful steering of the work of the Security Council during the month of July.

I also thank the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, for his valuable briefing.

Bahrain reaffirms its long-standing position on the Palestinian question and its support for all efforts aimed at reaching a just, comprehensive and lasting solution that will enable the Palestinian people to exercise its legitimate rights like any other people and to establish an independent State of Palestine within the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in line with the principle of a two-State solution and on the basis of the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant internationally recognized resolutions.

I would like to make it clear that Israeli plans to annex Palestinian territory in the West Bank and impose Israeli sovereignty over it and over the illegal settlements established on the territory of the State of Palestine occupied since 1967, in particular the annexation of the Palestinian valley and Area C in the West Bank, pose a serious threat to international peace and security. Such a flagrant violation of international resolutions undermines the prospects of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

As the Palestinian question is one of the oldest issues on the agenda of the Security Council, today the international community must build on decades of United Nations efforts to find a peaceful, comprehensive, just and lasting solution.

Bahrain supports the Secretary-General's call for an immediate global ceasefire to reinforce diplomatic action in conflict zones in order to facilitate the delivery of medical and humanitarian assistance to the places that are most vulnerable to the coronavirus disease pandemic. The fight against the pandemic has become a shared battle. Implementing the ceasefire has proven considerably difficult, amid conflicts that have been escalating for years and a prevailing climate of mistrust between the parties. Nevertheless, there remains an urgent need to reinforce diplomatic attempts to address these challenges and find ways to promote measures to consolidate international peace and security.

Bahrain welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), concerning Iran (S/2020/531). In the report, it was stated that that country was directly responsible for the terrorist attacks carried out last year against two Aramco facilities in Abqaiq governorate and Khurays in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and for launching cruise missiles and drones at Abha International Airport.

Bahrain also strongly condemns the Iranian-backed Houthi militias for recently preparing two remotely operated booby-trapped vessels to carry out attacks and terrorist operations in the Bab Al-Mandab Strait and the southern Red Sea. Those actions show that the Houthis clearly persist in threatening the safety of maritime traffic and are seriously undermining the security and stability of the region.

Given the serious threat posed by Iranian large-scale arms transfers in the region, it has become necessary for the Security Council to extend the arms embargo

on Iran. The embargo is an important tool to counter the proliferation of weapons by Iran, promote regional stability and hold Iran responsible for its actions.

In conclusion, the common threat faced by the world today makes it all the more pressing to consolidate peace and stability and confront threats thereto. We must therefore prevail in putting an end to practices that exacerbate the suffering of civilians around the world in order to achieve international peace and security and guarantee a more prosperous future for all the world's peoples.



## Annex 22

### Statement by the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, Rabab Fatima

I would like to begin by congratulating the presidency of Germany on its successful steering of the work of the Security Council for the month of July amid this unprecedented challenging time of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). We also thank the German presidency for organizing this important debate. I take this opportunity to thank Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his comprehensive briefing this morning (annex 1).

My delegation aligns itself with the statement submitted by the United Arab Emirates on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (annex 47).

The overall situation in the occupied Palestinian territory unfortunately continues to be characterized by tensions and conflicts, violating the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination. The situation has worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Amid this dual jeopardy, Israel's illegal and unilateral plan to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank, including the Jordan Valley and the land on which it established its settlements and the wall, could not be more worrisome. The annexation threat of Israel is a clear and grave violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Fourth Geneva Convention, and contrary to the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and Security Council.

The annexation plan, if implemented, will have acutely adverse economic, political, humanitarian and human rights ramifications in the occupied Palestinian territory. It will have grave consequences for peace in the Middle East. Above all, it will pose a serious impediment to the efforts of the international community and the United Nations to advance the international peace and security agenda.

We therefore join the international community's show of global solidarity in urging Israel, the occupying Power, to stop the implementation of its illegal and unilateral annexation plan. Furthermore, these efforts have to be sustained and followed up in the long run. We call upon Israel to bring an end to all violations, provocations and aggressions against the Palestinians, in response to the Secretary-General's global ceasefire appeal. The unabated construction of settlements, the land confiscation, the demolition of Palestinian homes and properties and the blockade of the Gaza Strip by Israel also need to be halted. The sanctity of Islamic and Christian holy places, particularly the Al-Aqsa Mosque, must be maintained at all costs.

We remain deeply concerned by the continued socioeconomic downturn and deteriorating humanitarian condition of the Palestinian people, which has been further aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The international community must ensure that Israel allows unfettered access for humanitarian and medical assistance for the Palestinians to confront the pandemic.

The pandemic has put a greater demand on the perennially outstretched capacity of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Therefore, the United Nations COVID-19 revised response plan for the occupied Palestinian territory, the UNRWA COVID-19 response flash appeal and the Agency's core programme budget require immediate support. We call upon the international community to come up with generous and predictable funding and technical assistance to enable UNRWA to continue its work, which is a lifeline for Palestinians.

A multilateral effort is the only way to bring about lasting peace in the Middle East and resolve the Palestinian crisis. Bangladesh believes that the timely implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Quartet road map and the Arab Peace Initiative is of singular importance in that regard. The threat of annexation has made the international community's greater resolve and renewed action to carry forward the political process more imperative than ever before. We expect the Security Council to redouble its efforts to stop Israel's illegal and unilateral annexation plan of the Palestinian territory, in fulfilment of its Charter obligations, through the implementation of its relevant resolutions, particularly resolution 2334 (2016).

As for us, we will continue to firmly stand by the cause of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination until the establishment of the State of Palestine on the basis of the two-State solution and the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

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**Annex 23****Statement by the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations**

Brazil would like to thank the briefers, and the presidency for convening this quarterly debate on the situation in the Middle East.

We take this opportunity to reaffirm our solidarity with all those affected by the pandemic, which has posed unexpected challenges to a region already beset by mass displacement and economic uncertainty. Brazil has heeded the call for increased contributions to the humanitarian effort, having recently announced donations to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and to the Syrian humanitarian response plan.

Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Brazil wishes to reiterate its support for a two-State solution, with Israelis and Palestinians living side by side in peace and security. We encourage the parties to seek a constructive political environment conducive to a return to meaningful negotiations and to engage in new and creative diplomatic efforts with an open mind in order to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement.

On Syria, we reiterate the importance of fully complying with the ceasefire in Idlib, while ensuring that humanitarian aid can reach those in need in an agile and unhindered manner. Brazil also underscores its support for the work of Special Envoy Geir Pedersen and hopes to see further progress on the Geneva track, especially through the convening of the Constitutional Committee, potentially this coming August.

On Yemen, we commend the Special Envoy's efforts to negotiate a joint declaration between the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah, which could pave the way for a ceasefire across the country and the urgent resumption of the political process.

As for Libya, Brazil urges all parties to resume dialogue under the auspices of acting Special Representative Stephanie Williams, with a view to undertaking joint efforts against the pandemic. The arms embargo is indispensable to de-escalate the conflict, and its systematic violation remains a cause for great concern.

As the crises in the Middle East and North Africa unfold, we should bear in mind that long-term political stability and economic prosperity are mutually reinforcing. At the same time, regional socioeconomic development can be achieved only through the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Safeguarding religious freedom should also remain a high priority, for minority communities often withstand violence and persecution the most.

While the current situation poses immense risks and challenges to the Middle East and North Africa, it also presents unique opportunities for dialogue and cooperation towards peace and prosperity. Brazil stands ready to contribute to efforts in that regard.

## Annex 24

### **Statement by the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Cheikh Niang**

First, I would like to congratulate Germany on its professional handling of this month's presidency of the Council in this new virtual setting. We thank Special Coordinator Mladenov and the other briefers, Mr. Khalil Shikaki and Mr. Daniel Levy, for their timely and important presentations.

While the entire world is still fighting the relentless spread of the coronavirus disease pandemic, the Palestinian people under occupation face not only the challenge of the virus but also an even bigger crisis — the plans and measures of the Israeli Government to proceed with the *de jure* annexation of more parts of the West Bank.

Let there be no mistake: the creeping annexation of the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, has been ongoing for more than five decades and has become increasingly entrenched over the years. The illegal Israeli settlement enterprise, with its network of separate roads as well as social and economic activities, the permit regime, demolitions of homes and structures, evictions of entire Palestinian families, settler violence and raids by the Israeli security forces have marked the lives of entire generations of Palestinians. The Gaza Strip has remained severed from the rest of the Palestinian territory for 13 years under an illegal Israeli blockade affecting the lives and livelihood of the 2 million Palestinians in the coastal enclave, which must be lifted.

The goal of seeing Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security along the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian State, has never been at greater risk. As the Secretary-General stated at the Security Council meeting on 24 June (see S/2020/596, annex 1), we are at a “watershed moment”. The prohibition on the acquisition of territory by force is absolute in the Charter of the United Nations, and any annexation, regardless of its scope, would constitute a grave breach of international law. As the Committee stated on 5 May (see GA/PAL/1432), annexation represents a serious threat to the two-State solution and threatens global peace and security.

If it were to go ahead, *de jure* annexation would not only inflict a deadly blow to the realization of the two-State solution and the possibility of reaching a negotiated solution but also jeopardize the essence of the principles of international law and the whole legal framework that the international community has built over decades. Respect for the Geneva Conventions and for United Nations resolutions and ensuring accountability for breaches of international law, such as annexation, must be the utmost concern for the community of nations.

Opposition to annexation plans by Israel was clearly expressed by most Security Council members at the meeting of the Council on 24 June, as well as by our Committee's partners among the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, United Nations Special Rapporteurs, renowned jurists, eminent persons, including The Elders, civil society and people from all walks of life. King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein of Jordan, among others, has warned that any unilateral Israeli measure to annex land in the West Bank would threaten regional stability. The Committee joins all those who have affirmed that the annexation of occupied Palestinian territory will not be recognized as legitimate by the international community and will also result in consequences and irreparable damage to Israel's diplomatic standing.

While no open expression of repudiation for such plans has been heard from Israel since the passing of the annexation deadline of 1 July, it is our hope and appeal that the Israeli Government immediately abandon this unlawful plan.

The Palestinian leadership's announcement that it is no longer bound by agreements and understandings with Israel and the United States, including the security cooperation, points to the fact that the situation might become untenable if annexation were to be implemented. The halting of all bilateral contacts will increasingly have a dramatic adverse impact on all aspects of Palestinian life, with destabilizing results.

We call on the Quartet to assume its responsibilities, as mandated by the Security Council, to engage with the parties to revive the much-needed peace process in the context of an international framework within the well-known internationally endorsed parameters, including the Arab Peace Initiative.

We reiterate our call for the implementation of all relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), particularly paragraph 5, which calls on Member States to distinguish, in their dealings, between Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and with regard to Israeli settlement activities, which are illegal under international law. We urge the Palestinians to continue with their efforts for intra-Palestinian reconciliation, and we take note of the encouraging signs exemplified by the recent call for unity between Fatah and Hamas.

We welcome the pledges of \$130 million for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) expressed by donors at the conference on 23 June. This is critical support for the Palestinian people, but it still falls short of actual needs, thus compelling our renewed appeal for support to UNRWA. The international community must continue to make every effort to guarantee strong and predictable financing for the Agency at a time of instability, volatility and great vulnerability for Palestine refugees and for the Middle East.

The ongoing occupation and threat of further annexation are now compounded by the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, which has reached thousands of cases not only in the State of Palestine, posing serious challenges for the delivery of basic health and social services to the population, including women and girls, but is also threatening the health and well-being of Israelis. The negative shock will have profound implications for the Palestinian economy, public welfare, employment, social cohesion and financial and institutional stability. We stress that strong international donor support and targeted technical assistance will be crucial on the path to recovery.

Halting annexation, however, cannot be the goal, only to go back to what is rapidly transforming into a one-State reality of occupation. Being satisfied to remain on the brink while staring at the abyss cannot be enough. Let us be mindful of the eyes of the lost generations of Palestinians and Israelis and let us take decisive action for their sake, end the occupation and achieve the two-State solution as the cornerstone for just and lasting peace and security in the region.

**Annex 25****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative and Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Cuba to the United Nations, Ana Silvia Rodríguez Abascal**

[Original: English and Spanish]

We support the statement submitted by Azerbaijan on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (annex 20).

The effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) demand from us a dynamic, concerted and efficient response, based on complementarity, cooperation and solidarity. This pandemic is a challenge facing all of us, creating a crisis of several devastating effects not only on health but also on the economy, trade and our societies in general. COVID-19 does not respect borders or ideologies. Political differences must be put aside in this dramatic moment for humankind as the only alternative for the search for joint solutions. We reiterate our deep concern about the pandemic's impact on Middle East countries, and we call upon them to refrain from taking any action that might lead to a greater deterioration of stability and peace in the region.

While Governments around the world tirelessly work to tackle the pandemic, Israel continues to occupy Palestinian territory, implement annexation policies, increase its illegal and colonizing practices and measures, including the construction and expansion of settlements on occupied Palestinian territory, and undertake punitive demolitions, the seizure of resources from Palestinian institutions, the forced displacement of hundreds of Palestinian civilians and the blockade of the Gaza Strip, thereby exacerbating the emergency situation that the public health system is facing as well as the socioeconomic and humanitarian situation of Palestine, particularly in East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, and hindering the possibility for countering the spread of COVID-19.

We regret the precarious situation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East that has resulted from the withdrawal of United States financial support.

We reject the annexation plans for the occupied West Bank, which, after long years of negotiation, is a threat to the future of the Palestinian State, in clear violation of international law and human rights.

It is worrisome that no measures were taken during the most recent reporting period to end the Israeli military aggression and occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in accordance with resolution 2334 (2016). The Council has remained silent while Israel consolidates with impunity its policy of expanding illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory and now threatens to annex Palestinian territories in the Jordan Valley and other areas of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

In the light of recent events, we once again call on the Security Council to abide by the responsibility vested in it by the Charter of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security. The Council must demand that Israel immediately and completely end all its colonizing policies and practices and abstain from taking any unilateral action contrary to resolutions on the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine, adopted by this organ, in particular resolution 2334 (2016).

The systemic use of the United States veto to guarantee Israel's impunity for its actions must cease. The aggressive, unilateral and unjustified actions of the

United States in the Middle East severely undermine the legitimate interests of the Arab and Islamic nations and are leading to a dangerous escalation in the region.

We reiterate our rejection of the so-called deal of the century, drawn up by the current United States Government, which ignores the two-State solution that has been historically supported by the United Nations, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and other international actors. The unilateral action of the United States Government in recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and establishing its diplomatic mission there shows disrespect for the city's historical status; that action and its decision to recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Syrian Golan constitute flagrant violations of the United Nations Charter, international law and the relevant resolutions adopted by the Security Council. We demand once again that Israel totally and unconditionally withdraw from the Syrian Golan and from all occupied Arab territories.

We reaffirm our unrestricted support for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that will enable the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination and establish an independent and sovereign State based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and which will guarantee the right of return for the refugees. We express our unwavering solidarity with the Government and the people of Palestine and our support for Palestine's entry into the United Nations as a full Member State.

With respect to Iran, we ratify our full support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and we reject, with respect to Iran, the withdrawal of the United States from that agreement, its attempts to disregard the validity of resolution 2231 (2015), endorsing the Plan of Action, the reimposition of unilateral sanctions and the military threat made against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

We reiterate our strongest condemnation of the United States sanctions imposed against Syria and the implementation of the Caesar Act, which are affecting the country's reconstruction after nine years of war and in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, in gross and flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter, international law and the human rights of the Syrian people.

It is unacceptable that some countries have to suffer the imposition of arbitrary unilateral coercive measures, contrary to international law and the United Nations Charter. We demand the immediate end, without political conditions, of the illegal unilateral measures imposed on sovereign States that, in addition to their permanent impacts on the countries affected, hinder the fight against the pandemic.

Against this complex backdrop, the United States has unveiled a foreign policy aimed at stirring up and promoting conflict, division, chauvinism and supremacist and racist positions. It is attacking multilateralism and unjustly undermining the role played by international organizations, in particular the World Health Organization.

The behaviour of the United States threatens international peace and security, and its constant aggression against certain countries aggravates the situation. We support the urgent call of the Secretary-General to end the sickness of war and fight the disease that is ravaging our world, namely, the coronavirus pandemic. All forms of war, including unconventional warfare, must cease.

In the light of the challenges I have just outlined, the defence of the right to peace remains a fundamental priority. It is the duty of all States, and particularly of members of the Security Council, to defend multilateralism and the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter, including respect for the sovereign equality of States and their political independence, territorial unity and integrity, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts and abstention from the use or threat of use of force in international relations.



**Annex 26****Statement by the Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

First of all, I would like to congratulate Germany on its successful presidency of the Security Council in July 2020. We recognize the additional efforts that the Council presidencies have had to make in the past months, which have been marked by the challenges facing humankind owing to the effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

It is an honour for Ecuador to address the Security Council to present its position on the question of Palestine, which has historically been an issue of concern and vital importance. In this regard, we reaffirm our solidarity with Palestine and reiterate our commitment to alleviating the difficult situation faced by the Palestinian people. Relief will be achieved only through a political, peaceful, definitive and just solution agreed by the parties themselves and based on the existence of two States, Palestine and Israel, within the recognized 1967 borders.

Ecuador rejects any kind of incitement to violence that would make a solution for the parties even more remote. We reiterate the call made in resolution 2334 (2016) for both parties to observe calm and restraint and act in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law.

I would like to express my delegation's concern about the humanitarian situation, including the human rights violations and the non-compliance with international humanitarian law, which is in place in the occupied Palestinian territory. Ecuador calls on the international community to prevent the implementation of any kind of illegal settlement policy, in particular the demolition and confiscation of Palestinian-owned infrastructure, including water and sanitation infrastructure, throughout the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as well as any effort to impede humanitarian assistance,

We express our deep concern over annexation measures, which constitute grave breaches of international law and seriously affect the possibility of finding a two-State solution and threaten prospects for renewed negotiations. We reject any unilateral action that undermines hopes for resolving the conflict through negotiations and causes further deterioration of the humanitarian situation of thousands of Palestinians. We call on all parties to make collective efforts to launch credible negotiations and intensify regional and international diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East without delay.

Finally, I would like to reiterate Ecuador's full support for the call of Secretary-General António Guterres for a ceasefire and for silencing arms around the world, in accordance with the joint statement co-initiated by Ecuador, in conjunction with 172 other countries, with a view to working together to fight COVID-19, which is our common enemy. The implementation of that appeal would also serve as a first step towards achieving a definitive and sustainable peace.



## Annex 27

### Statement by the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Germany on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. I value its efforts to steer the Council's work in the light of the regional and international challenges on its agenda.

I also wish to convey my appreciation for the briefing given by Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (annex 1).

Egypt associates itself with the statements on this issue submitted on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (annex 20) and of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (annex 47).

Although the international community, as represented by the United Nations, has taken up the question of Palestine since the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II), in 1947, providing for the establishment of a Palestinian State, the Palestinian people, deprived of its right to self-determination, continues to languish under Israeli occupation. Over several decades, the Palestinian question has gone through several phases, the most recent of which has been the endorsement by Arab States and the Palestinian leadership of peace as a strategic choice in the hope of stabilizing the conflict-riddled Middle East.

In that context, the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, undertook to negotiate with the Israeli side. Negotiations managed to spread the hope among the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, as well as others in the region, that a real peace could be achieved, ending one of the region's oldest crises, one that remains the defining issue in the Arab world. Nevertheless, after all these years, progress on the Palestinian question has stagnated, and the situation in the occupied territories has deteriorated. Israeli actions on the ground continue to accelerate and intensify, with the aim of imposing a fait accompli and undermining the two-State solution so as to render impossible the establishment of a Palestinian State.

Israel's settlement activities have continued. The occupying Power has persisted in confiscating land, expelling Palestinian citizens, destroying their homes and announcing plans to build additional settlement units. At the same time, Israeli settlers have violated the rights of the Palestinian people in the West Bank. Holy sites, particularly Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, have not been spared violent acts, despite the city's centrality to the followers of the world's three monotheistic religions.

Israel has not only adopted such practices, but it has also declared its intention to annex more Palestinian territory, as the agreement to form the current Israeli Government provides for the annexation of parts of the West Bank, in contravention of international law, United Nations resolutions, the Fourth Geneva Convention and all terms of reference of the peace process. This annexation is something that would effectively eliminate the two-State solution and undermine the prospect of resuming negotiations.

Any unilateral steps taken by Israel to annex Palestinian territories would amount to the imposition of a fait accompli and new facts on the ground that cannot be overcome or ignored. Such actions would cause the situation in the occupied territories to deteriorate further, adversely affecting the security and stability of

the entire region. They would also give militant and extremist voices a platform to spread their ideas, which are inimical to peace and coexistence among peoples.

Egypt has always asserted its long-standing position concerning the Palestinian people and its legitimate right to establish an independent State within the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. In the light of current developments, Egypt believes that the only way to uphold the rights of the Palestinian people is to put an end to unilateral actions, in particular plans to annex Palestinian territories, halt Israeli practices in the West Bank and lift the blockade on the Gaza Strip. Those steps would create a climate conducive to the resumption of negotiations on the basis of a two-State solution, the Arab Peace Initiative, international law and internationally recognized resolutions.

The other crises in the Middle East are not faring much better than the question of Palestine. Our region is increasingly affected by a dogmatic terrorist project that uses religion as a smokescreen to seize and monopolize power, destroying the principles of the nation-State and citizenship, without regard to the cost to the peoples of the region. It is regrettable that the United Nations and its organs continue to turn a blind eye to the crude and destructive actions of the Governments of a limited number of States in the region in support of these warped designs, while those States continue to spread terrorism, chaos and sectarian divisions, flouting the most important principles of international law.

Those malicious schemes are doomed to fail. In the end, the solutions that will prevail are those that serve the interests of the peoples of the region and meet their aspirations for security and development through sovereign democratic States that respect the principles of citizenship and do not use religion as a smokescreen for political ambitions or expansionist fantasies.

Egypt endorses the call for a global ceasefire that would enable the peoples of the region to address pandemic-related developments and lay the groundwork for a comprehensive political process based on the terms of reference set out in the relevant Security Council resolutions on resolving protracted regional conflicts. The United Nations must ensure that efforts aimed at peacefully resolving the crises in Syria and Yemen are guided by the peoples of those countries, free from foreign interference or dictates. Such efforts must also fully preserve the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of those countries and the unity of their peoples.

In that context, Egypt expresses deep concern at the alarming findings set out in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) (S/2020/531), published in June. Those findings relate to the origin of smuggled weapons seized en route to Yemen, as well as to the missiles and uncrewed aerial vehicles used in attacks on vital facilities in Saudi Arabia last year, attacks that Egypt condemned in the strongest terms.

In a statement delivered by Minister for Foreign Affairs Sameh Hassan Shokry Selim at the Security Council meeting on Libya held on 8 July 2020, Egypt reiterated the call by President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire (see S/2020/686, annex 18). Egypt supports the political settlement of the Libyan crisis enshrined in the Cairo declaration of 6 June 2020, which is entirely consistent with the outcomes of the Berlin Conference and Security Council resolutions on Libya. The aims set forth in those declarations are to stabilize the country by restructuring the Presidential Council of Libya, form an independent Libyan Government that enjoys consensus among all Libyan parties concerned and the confidence of the Libyan House of Representatives, dissolve armed militias, combat terrorism and ensure that Libyan wealth is distributed equitably.

Egypt once again condemns the destructive foreign interventions in Libya by a specific regional party that is working to recruit terrorist fighters from Syria and which supports armed militias and militant groups in the country. Owing to those interventions, there is a widening gap between, on the one hand, the legitimate aspirations of the Libyan people to live in peace, security and dignity in a unified, independent State and, on the other hand, the very real project of chaos and extremism that this regional actor seeks to sow in the country.

The international community has tarried too long. The time has come to heed the voice of reason and wisdom, realize the hopes and aspirations of the peoples of the region to live in security and peace and safeguard the region's resources and lives instead of squandering them on conflicts that bleed them dry. Egypt will continue to work for peace and security in the Middle East in order to forge a better tomorrow for the peoples of the region.

## Annex 28

### Statement by the Head of Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, Olof Skoog

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union (EU).

The EU remains united in its commitment to achieving a two-State solution that meets Israeli and Palestinian security needs and Palestinian aspirations for statehood and sovereignty, ends the occupation that began in 1967 and resolves all final-status issues in order to end the conflict.

The EU recalls that a lasting solution to the conflict must be achieved on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles — including land for peace, the road map and the agreements previously reached by the parties — and of the Arab Peace Initiative, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign and viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security and mutual recognition. The EU reiterates its fundamental commitment to the security of Israel, including with regard to current and emerging threats in the region.

The EU strongly opposes all actions that undermine the viability of the two-State solution and urges both sides to demonstrate, through policies and actions, a genuine commitment to a two-State solution in order to rebuild trust and create a path back to meaningful negotiations.

To that end, the EU will continue to closely monitor developments on the ground and their broader implications and will consider further action in order to protect the viability of the two-State solution, which is constantly eroded by new facts on the ground.

As the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union, Josep Borrell Fontelles, wrote in his letter to the current members of the Security Council on 23 June:

“In recent days, I have had open, friendly and constructive conversations with a number of senior Israeli interlocutors, including Alternate Prime Minister Benny Gantz and Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi. In addition, I am in close contact with the Palestinian leadership and with other key Arab representatives and, together with EU Foreign Ministers, I also held a useful discussion on the Middle East peace process with United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

“In these discussions, I emphasized the EU’s opposition to any unilateral steps by the parties, in particular the possible annexation by Israel of any parts of the West Bank. I am firmly convinced that such steps would endanger the continuous efforts of the Security Council and the wider international community to achieve the vision of a region where two States — Israel and Palestine — live side by side within secure and recognized borders.

“In March this year, at the Human Rights Council in Geneva, the EU delivered a statement to that effect, noting clearly that ‘any annexation would constitute a serious violation of international law’. Indeed, a core legal provision of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, is that the acquisition of territory by force is prohibited.

“Importantly, unilateral annexation would cause real damage to the prospects for a viable two-State solution.” (see S/2020/596, annex 23)

Recalling that settlements are illegal under international law, constitute an obstacle to peace and threaten to make a two-State Solution impossible, the EU reiterates its strong opposition to Israel's settlement policy and actions taken in that context, such as building the separation barrier beyond the 1967 line; demolitions and confiscation, including of EU-funded projects; evictions; forced transfers, including of Bedouins; illegal outposts and restrictions of movement and access. The EU calls on Israel to halt continued settlement expansion, including in East Jerusalem, especially in sensitive areas such as Har Homa, Givat Hamatos and Area E-1, which severely threatens the two-State solution.

The EU calls for all parties to take swift steps to produce a fundamental change to the political, security and economic situation in the Gaza Strip, including the end of the closure and a full opening of the crossing points, while addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns. Recent rocket fire by militant groups is unacceptable and underlines again the danger of escalation. All stakeholders must commit to non-violence and peace.

The EU reaffirms its readiness to work towards the resumption of meaningful negotiations to resolve all final-status issues and to achieve a just and lasting peace. It urges both sides to demonstrate, through policies and actions, a genuine commitment to the two-State solution as the only realistic way to end the conflict.

Allow me to turn now to the situation in Syria. In Idlib, the offensive by the Syrian regime and its backers, including Russia, has created untold human suffering and has provoked the worst humanitarian crisis since the beginning of the Syrian conflict.

The EU reiterates, in the strongest possible terms, its call on all parties to maintain a sustainable ceasefire so as to guarantee the protection of civilians on the ground and from the air and to enable the unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance by the international community.

While the European Union recognizes the presence of United Nations-designated terrorist groups in the region, indiscriminate attacks and the destruction of civilian infrastructure — including health facilities, schools and settlements for displaced persons — by the Syrian regime and its allies cannot be justified under any circumstances and must stop. We reiterate the EU position that all the perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity should be held accountable.

The EU has condemned Turkey's unilateral military action in north-eastern Syria, which causes unacceptable human suffering, undermines the fight against Da'esh and seriously threatens European security. Turkey is a key partner of the European Union and a critically important actor in the Syrian crisis and the region. Turkey's security concerns in north-eastern Syria should be addressed through political and diplomatic means, not military action, and in accordance with international humanitarian law.

In response to the findings of the 8 April report of the Investigation and Identification Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Executive Council recently took a crucially important decision on addressing the possession and use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime. That decision has been carefully drafted in accordance with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. It sets clear and verifiable parameters for action that the Syrian regime needs to take in order to return to full compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. The European Union strongly supports the decision and urges the Syrian regime to take all the measures required to redress the situation in the specified time frame. As set out in the decision, it will now be the duty of the Conference of the

States Parties to decide any further course of action, in accordance with article XII of the Convention. We call on all States parties to fulfil their responsibility and bolster the credibility of the Convention.

The EU urges the Syrian regime to return to the negotiating table and repeats that any sustainable solution to the conflict requires a genuine political transition in line with resolution 2254 (2015) and the 2012 Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex) negotiated by the Syrian parties within the United Nations-led Geneva process, and remains committed to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian State.

The EU is addressing the humanitarian situation as a matter of priority. It is delivering humanitarian assistance to address the emergency needs for shelter, medical and food support of some 1 million displaced persons and all other Syrians in need in the Idlib region. We must continue to ensure safe, sustained and immediate access to populations in need, in full compliance with international humanitarian law. As stated by High Representative Josep Borrell and Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarčič on 12 July:

“On Saturday, 11 July, the Security Council adopted a much-needed resolution on cross border assistance that is crucial for helping people suffering from the conflict in Syria.

“However, it is a matter of deep concern that the resolution adopted after repeated vetoes by Russia and China authorizes only one crossing point out of the two previously available to the United Nations. The unconstructive approach of certain members of the Security Council is all the more regrettable at a time when needs have never been greater and in the context of the coronavirus pandemic.

“Only the Bab Al-Hawa crossing point is now left for the United Nations to provide essential humanitarian assistance. The authorization of only one crossing will hamper the delivery of life-saving emergency supplies to hundreds of thousands of people in need in north-west Syria.”

The EU will be ready to assist in the reconstruction of Syria when a comprehensive, genuine and inclusive political transition, in the framework of resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva process, is firmly under way.

**Annex 29****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Iran to the United Nations, Majid Takht Ravanchi**

Today the decades-long suffering of the Palestinian people has become manifold as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, as well as the intensification of oppressive measures by the Israeli regime. What has made this horrific humanitarian situation in Palestine more bitter and intolerable is the regime's continued brazen determination to further advance its unlawful expansionist policies.

Under the current unprecedented circumstances, where the situation in Palestine and the region as a whole has become further entangled and complicated, the international community has a serious responsibility to do everything in its power to address the crisis and prevent the further deterioration of regional and international peace and security.

That must start with the Security Council, which, according to the Charter of the United Nations, has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The situation of Palestine is, first and foremost, a result of the Council's decades-long inaction in the face of the expansionist policies and unlawful practices of the Israeli regime. In order to prevent the persistent erosion of trust and confidence in the Council, and in the United Nations in general, the Council must act in accordance with its responsibility under the Charter.

Parallel to the consideration of this situation in the Security Council, the international community must also put collective coordinated pressure on the United States to compel it to put an end to its irresponsible policy of unreservedly supporting the unlawful acts of the Israeli regime, as well as its complete and systematic shielding of Israel from the Council's measures, thus emboldening the regime to continue committing crimes with total impunity.

Unfortunately, the support of the United States has continued unabated over the past seven decades, in flagrant violation of the basic principles of international law, in contempt of all standards of international conduct and counter to all principles of humanity and morality.

While the occupation of Palestine is the main cause of the Middle East crisis, the Israeli regime, by revealing its plan to annex significant parts of the occupied Palestinian territory, has opened a new chapter in its expansionist policy, which, if unchecked, would further exacerbate the already tense situation in the Middle East.

As a peremptory norm of international law, the occupation and acquisition of territory by force is prohibited and inadmissible. Therefore, the annexation of even the smallest part of the occupied Palestinian territory would be a gross violation of the basic principles of international law and the Charter. In fulfilment of their legal obligations under international law, all States must therefore refuse to recognize such annexation.

Additionally, the Israeli regime must also be compelled to put an end to its continued construction and expansion of settlements, as well as the sustained inhumane blockade of the Gaza Strip. The latter is more urgent given the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Palestinians' dire need for food, medicine and medical equipment to treat the sick and prevent the further spread of the coronavirus.

Given the current reports about the pitiable condition of the Palestinians in Israeli prisons, the regime must also be forced to release the Palestinian prisoners — a need that is now urgent due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, ending the Israeli regime's occupation of other Arab territories must be the focus of all measures taken by the international community, including the Security Council. Accordingly, the regime must be compelled to end its occupation of all Palestinian territories, as well as the occupied Syrian Golan and parts of Lebanon. In addition, it must put an end to all its destabilizing activities in the region, including the systematic violation of the sovereignty of Syria and Lebanon.

As I once again stress the need to end the decades of occupation, aggression, crime, death and destruction in Palestine, I would like to reiterate that the Islamic Republic of Iran continues supporting the just cause of the Palestinian people and the full realization of all their inalienable rights, including their inherent right to self-determination and to establish an independent Palestinian State in all of Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.



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**Annex 30****Statement by the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations**

I thank you, Sir, for convening today's debate on this important topic, and I also thank today's briefers.

Ireland fully aligns itself with the statement submitted on behalf of the European Union (annex 28).

At the outset, I would like to express Ireland's support for efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory. The rapid increase in cases over recent weeks is deeply worrisome, and we urge full cooperation in efforts to control the virus and ensure access to health care for all those in need.

The sharp rise in cases in densely populated refugee camps is of particular concern, and we applaud the exceptional work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in providing vital health-care services to Palestine refugees. At the 23 June pledging conference, Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defense Simon Coveney announced an additional €1 million in Irish funding to UNRWA, on top of our €6 million allocation for 2020. UNRWA continues to face an extremely difficult financial situation, and we encourage all donors to consider extending additional support to the Agency.

I must once again express Ireland's deep concern regarding the threatened annexation of parts of the occupied Palestinian territory. We share the assessment of Secretary-General Guterres, who told the Council on 24 June (see S/2020/596, annex I) that annexation, if implemented, would constitute a most serious violation of international law, grievously harm the prospect of a two-State solution and undercut the possibilities of a renewal of negotiations. We must also recognize that annexation would compound existing violations of the human rights of Palestinians in the affected areas of the West Bank, which is already negatively impacted by illegal settlements.

The annexation of any part of the occupied Palestinian territory would also threaten regional stability and would have inevitable and negative consequences for Israel's relations with the international community, including the European Union. We urge Israel, as an important partner, to refrain from taking such a damaging step.

Ireland remains committed to a negotiated two-State solution that ends the occupation that began in 1967, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States, on the basis of international law, the internationally agreed parameters and relevant Security Council resolutions. This accords with the European Union's firm position and with General Assembly resolution 73/89, of 6 December 2018, which Ireland introduced (see A/73/PV.47), on a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. We stand ready to support all efforts towards the achievement of this goal.

I turn now to the situation in Syria. The conflict in Syria continues to cause unimaginable suffering, particularly in the north-west and north-east. Although a ceasefire in Idlib holds, the potential for escalation remains all too real. Economic destabilization, the spread of COVID-19 and new restrictions on the cross-border delivery of aid further threaten deeply vulnerable Syrians. We welcome the recent renewal of the cross-border mandate for the delivery of humanitarian aid, but deeply regret that just a single crossing remains to serve the millions of people in the north-west who rely on aid, many of them children.

Ireland strongly condemns all violations of international law in Syria and welcomes every effort in pursuit of accountability and justice. We thank the

Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic for its important work, including its report of 2 July (A/HRC/44/61). We reiterate our support for the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism, and call again for the situation in Syria to be referred to the International Criminal Court.

Ireland joins the call for a nationwide ceasefire in Syria, and it supports the Special Envoy for Syria in his efforts to bring about a genuine, inclusive and comprehensive political solution, based on resolution 2254 (2015).

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**Annex 31****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, Ishikane Kimihiro**

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) continues to pose a serious threat to human security around the world, including in the Middle East. Japan fully supports the ongoing efforts by all parts of the United Nations system to tackle the pandemic. As a co-initiator of the statement signed by over 170 Member States and observers in support of the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan strongly hopes that the recently adopted resolution 2532 (2020) will be respected in full by all relevant parties.

Thanks to the efforts of both the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Government, the number of COVID-19 infections, as well as the death toll in Palestine, remained relatively low during the initial stage. However, the numbers are growing, and we need to do more to contain the virus under the internationally concerted effort. Since the onset of this crisis, Japan has contributed around \$10.8 million to international organizations, including UNICEF and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to support Palestine's effort to counter the pandemic.

Japan highly values the role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in densely populated refugee camps. The Agency has again demonstrated its capacity to provide quality services. Japan commends all the front-line workers of UNRWA for their dedication in daily operations under such difficult circumstances. The Agency plays a vital role not only in meeting humanitarian needs, but also in regional stability. So far in 2020, Japan has contributed over \$25 million to UNRWA, including about \$1.5 million in response to the flash appeal for the COVID-19 response. We expect UNRWA to diversify its donors to realize a more stable financial base. To this end, in mid-June, Japan organized a virtual working-level meeting of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development and encouraged our Asian partners to continue supporting UNRWA.

Japan remains committed to supporting a two-State solution. The conflict between the Israeli and the Palestinian sides should be resolved only through negotiations, based on relevant Security Council resolutions and known parameters. We are very concerned about the continued settlement activities by Israel, including the demolition of Palestinian-owned structures, which undermines efforts towards a peaceful resolution.

If the application of sovereignty to the West Bank were to be unilaterally put into effect by Israel, irrespective of the territorial scope of such measures, it would severely undermine mutual confidence between the parties towards achieving a two-State solution and might lead to the destabilization of the region. We have conveyed this firm message to the Israeli side, including during the foreign ministers' telephone conversation on 14 July. We reiterate our strong expectation that Israel will act in a sensible manner.

The resumption of dialogue between the parties must be the priority. Japan is ready to play a positive role through its engagement with relevant international frameworks, including the Quartet. In the face of the unprecedented human security crisis caused by COVID-19, international cooperation that places people at the centre must be the way forward for peace in the Middle East.

**Annex 32****Statement by the Permanent Mission of Jordan to the United Nations**

Let me first start by congratulating you, Mr. President, and Germany on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Germany is an active force for global peace, stability and multilateralism, and we look forward to continuing to work with you, Sir, on addressing regional challenges. We would also like to express our gratitude to the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, for his briefing.

The looming threat of Israeli annexation of parts of the occupied Palestinian territory puts our collective and joint efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace for Palestinians on the basis of the two-State solution in jeopardy. Preventing the annexation of the occupied Palestinian lands and creating horizons for re-engagement through direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians towards achieving two States living side by side in peace and security is an urgent priority.

On 7 July 2020, the Foreign Ministers of Jordan, Egypt, France and Germany issued a joint declaration on the current state of the Middle East peace process. They stressed that any annexation of Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 would be a violation of international law and imperil the foundations of the peace process. They also concurred that such a step would have serious consequences for the security and stability of the region and would constitute a major obstacle to efforts aimed at achieving a comprehensive and just peace. The ministers also emphasized that such a step could have consequences for the relationship with Israel.

Moreover, the Ministers of Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco and Palestine, who are members of the Arab ministerial delegation emanating from the Arab Peace Initiative, along with the ministers of Tunisia, the Arab member of the Security Council; Oman, the current Chairman of the Council of the League of Arab States, and Kuwait, the former Arab Security Council member, as well as Arab League Secretary-General, held a virtual meeting on 7 July, in which they underlined their full solidarity with the Palestinians, who are striving to fulfil their legitimate rights, including the right to freedom and establish a viable state with East Jerusalem as its capital on the lines of 4 June 1967 and on the basis of the two-State solution, in accordance with international law and the Arab Peace Initiative. The ministers called on the international community to take a clear and influential stand and act to deter the implementation of the annexation in order to uphold international law and protect peace, while calling for reviving serious and effective discussions on resolving the conflict on the basis of the two-State solution in accordance with relevant resolutions of international legitimacy.

It is important that the international community continue to support the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and ensure it continues to operate in fulfilment of its United Nations mandate pending a durable and just solution to the refugee issue, in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, including General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and within the context of a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the two-State solution.

During the extraordinary ministerial pledging conference on UNRWA, co-organized on 23 June by Jordan and Sweden, 75 Governments and non-governmental organizations committed \$130 million to sustaining the operations and services of the Agency. We thank all States that have shown their support for UNRWA politically and financially. However, we must exert every possible effort to make UNRWA funding sustainable, predictable and sufficient. This means

addressing the chronic funding shortfalls and persistent cash-flow crises through multi-year commitments.

We also take this opportunity to express appreciation for UNRWA's staff as front-line responders to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and for the Agency's ability to ensure the delivery of its mandate in an increasingly challenging political and financial environment. As the largest host of Palestinian refugees, Jordan will continue to provide, along with its partners, all possible political and financial support to UNRWA to ensure that the agency continues to provide its vital services to Palestinian refugees.

In implementation of the directives of His Majesty King Abdullah II, Custodian of Muslim and Christians holy sites in Jerusalem, Jordan will continue to dedicate all its efforts to protect Jerusalem and its holy sites, preserve the historical and legal status quo and protect their Muslim and Christian identity.

In conclusion, those who believe in peace must speak against annexation. All those who want an end to the conflict must act to prevent annexation. The achievement of a just and lasting peace that meets all legitimate rights of the Palestinian people is a strategic Jordanian, Palestinian and Arab choice. Any other scenario is a threat to peace and to all of us in the region. We stand at a defining crossroads: we either fall deeper into the abyss of conflict and hopelessness, or we save the peace that is a regional and an international necessity. Jordan will continue to work with Arab countries and the international community towards realizing peace that is lasting and just.

**Annex 33****Statement by the Permanent Mission of Kuwait to the United Nations**

[Original: Arabic]

We would like to congratulate the Permanent Mission of Germany on its successful steering of the work of the Security Council this month. We also wish to thank Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, and to reaffirm our support for his efforts to calm the situation and restore stability, in particular given the spread of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Today the Security Council is holding its quarterly open debate on the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. Meanwhile, the international community continues to meet and work to confront the plans by Israel, the occupying Power, to annex land in the West Bank and impose Israeli sovereignty over areas of the Jordan Valley and the northern Dead Sea.

Over the past few months, Kuwait and the Arab States have intensified their efforts to confront attempts by Israel to exploit the world's preoccupation with tackling the novel coronavirus pandemic. Such attempts ignore the global push to halt hostilities, war and siege in this difficult humanitarian situation. At its meeting at the ministerial level last April, the Council of the League of Arab States stated that the Israeli Government's execution of those plans constituted a new war crime to add to its lengthy record of heinous crimes against the Palestinian people and a flagrant violations of the Charter of the United Nations, United Nations resolutions and international law. We have also watched as the international community has condemned these Israeli plans, which undermine the international bid to achieve a just and comprehensive peace. Perhaps the most significant expression of the international community's stand against Israeli annexation is the fact that, at the Security Council open debate on 24 June (see S/2020/596), a majority of Council members warned Israel against going through with its annexation plans and recalled its violations of international law.

The fact that Israel, the occupying Power, did not carry out its annexation plans on 1 July in no way means that it will change course. Israel seeks to perpetuate the occupation by continuing to perpetrate its illegal activities and policies, expanding and building thousands of settlement units and annexing the territories, in clear violation of resolution 2334 (2016), and preventing the establishment of an independent, contiguous, viable and sovereign Palestinian State. Given that Israel will not hesitate to exploit any circumstance or global crisis to flagrantly attack the Palestinian people, we need to revitalize international political and legal mechanisms to ensure that Israel is held accountable for its continued violations of the Palestinian people's rights under international law.

Those violations include arbitrary arrest campaigns; the demolition of Palestinian buildings; the destruction and seizure of property; the forced displacement of civilians, some of whom have fallen victim to settler crimes; the tightening of the siege imposed on Gaza for some 13 years; repeated attacks on Islamic and Christian holy sites; the attempt to undermine the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; and the continued adoption of unilateral and illegal decisions, such as freezing part of Palestinian tax revenue and endeavouring to alter the character, historical status and demographic composition of Jerusalem.

In the face of these Israeli abuses, we reiterate that the Security Council must take a firm stand in order to stop such crimes and attacks. The Council has no alternative but to shoulder its responsibility immediately, before it is too late,

because the occupation and the violation of the Palestinian people's rights will not lead to peace, especially with an epidemic ravaging humankind.

In conclusion, Kuwait remains committed to the Arab, Islamic and international position that peace is a strategic choice and that a lasting, comprehensive and just settlement must be based on the two-State solution, in accordance with the agreed terms of reference, namely, the relevant Security Council resolutions, the principle of land for peace, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative. Such a settlement would enable the Palestinian people to exercise its legitimate political rights and establish an independent State within its own territory, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

**Annex 34****Statement by the Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations, Maged Abdelfattah Abdelaziz**

[Original: Arabic]

Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the assumption by Germany of the Security Council presidency for this month, as well as to commend your efforts and those of your delegation in steering the work of the Council in an efficient and effective manner. I also wish to thank Mr. Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, and his team for the outstanding briefing and for their efforts on the ground, in extremely difficult conditions, especially with regard to the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016), on illegal Israeli settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Today's meeting of the Security Council naturally follows the Council's ministerial meeting held on 24 June (see S/2020/596), in which the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and a large number of foreign ministers of States members of the Security Council participated actively. Highly significant interventions were made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine (see S/2020/596, annex 19) and other ministers in attendance, who submitted their statements for inclusion in the record of the meeting. In those statements, they all clearly expressed their staunch opposition to Israeli plans to annex the occupied Palestinian territory. They also condemned those plans and the detrimental effects that they would have not only on the peace process and the principle of land for peace on which it was established, but also on the two-State solution — one of the pillars of international legitimacy, alongside the Arab Peace Initiative, the Oslo Accords, the Madrid principles and the numerous resolutions of the Security Council on the Palestinian question — and on the security and stability of the entire Middle East region. That meeting confirmed, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the international community stands united against annexation and that it is intent on opposing it.

The Secretary-General of the Arab League clearly highlighted at the previous meeting that the only way to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict was by safely implementing the two-State solution, because all parties were convinced that Israeli annexation plans would both harm the current peace process and destroy any prospect of peace in future. The Palestinians would lose faith in the prospect of a fair, negotiated settlement, and the Arabs would lose interest in regional and international peace. Annexation would lead to dark days for the conflict and for the region as a whole (see S/2020/596, annex 3).

The League of Arab States reaffirms the centrality of the two-State solution that the international community has adopted as the basis for resolving the Palestinian question, premised on the establishment of an independent State of Palestine within the borders of 4 June 1967, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. It reiterates its opposition to any peace plans that may be announced or implemented without direct negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli parties, or that include any proposals to change any of the main terms of reference of the peace process or to modify the status of the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. The League of Arab States opposes any attempts to recognize Israeli sovereignty over any of these territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif. It insists that an agreement must be reached on the five final-status issues through direct negotiations, under the neutral auspices of the international Quartet, whose role should be strengthened and expanded to include influential stakeholders in the peace process.



The League of Arab States looks forward to continuing to work closely and in earnest with the Security Council to confront the dangers facing the entire Middle East, on the one hand, and the Palestinian question, on the other hand, in particular by cooperating effectively to address Israeli plans to annex the Palestinian territories. It encourages the Security Council to make earnest efforts, first, to put in place practical mechanisms, inter alia, to provide protection to the Palestinian people, and work to put forward alternative initiatives to improve the prospects of the two-State solution on the basis of internationally recognized principles, with a view to ending the occupation and all illegal Israeli practices targeting the defenceless Palestinian people.

Secondly, the Security Council should reaffirm that the so-called annexation of any part of the occupied West Bank or the Jordan Valley would be null and void and would not be recognized, and work to put an immediate stop to the construction and expansion of illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Thirdly, the Council should work to implement and revitalize regional initiatives, chief among them the Arab Peace Initiative, in support of the peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and eschew any course of action inconsistent with the terms of reference of the peace process, whose purpose is to realize a two-State solution based on direct negotiations addressing the five parameters for a comprehensive and just final settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Fourthly, the Council should strive to revitalize and expand the Quartet in order to restore its role in the peace process between the Israeli and Palestinian sides, leading to the establishment of an independent, contiguous and sovereign Palestinian State, existing in security and peace within the borders of 4 June 1967.

Fifthly, the Council should make earnest efforts to ensure that Israel abides by the same international rules of accountability that are applied to all other States. There can be no preferential treatment, discrimination or double standards. The Council must send a clear message in that regard and unequivocally warn Israel against persisting in its violations of international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law, particularly as regards partial or total annexation of the occupied Palestinian territory.

## Annex 35

### Statement by the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, Amal Mudallali

The Middle East is truly at a “watershed moment”, as Secretary-General António Guterres told the Council recently (see S/2020/596, annex 1). For the Palestinians and the Arabs, this is a moment that will define whether we are condemned to a future of continuous conflict or a hopeful future of possible peace. The threat of annexation of parts of the West Bank is hanging like a sword over the heads of the Palestinians, and it constitutes an “existential threat to their future”, as Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayeh rightly said.

Israel is threatening to take unilateral action that will upend decades of peacemaking and of hope for a negotiated settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Such an act will end the two-State solution and bury any prospects for peace. How much longer can the Security Council accept Israel’s unilateral and illegal actions, which have defied and undermined the maintenance of peace and security in the region for so many decades? How much longer do the Palestinians have to see their basic rights violated and their legitimate aspirations to live in peace and security in an independent State denied?

Two years ago, during this same quarterly debate (see S/PV.8316), an overwhelming number of countries strongly condemned the adoption of a basic law by Israel enshrining de jure discrimination against the Arabs. Today, on the eve of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, Israel has decided to again manifest its utter disregard for international legality and multilateralism by stating its intention to annex parts of the West Bank.

There is no need to remind the Council of the multitude of condemnations that this decision has drawn from Governments, but also Parliaments, academia and civil society. In a letter, 1,080 Members of Parliament from 25 European countries rejected the annexation plans by Israel, underscoring the fact that it would be “fatal” to the prospects for peace, and called on their respective countries and the European Union to adopt international sanctions as a response. The annexation plan has also prompted more than 400 scholars of Jewish studies in North and South America, Europe and Israel to write a letter rejecting such plan and explaining that it would “formally (de jure) creat[e] apartheid conditions in Israel and Palestine”.

Unfortunately, this threat of annexation is just the culmination of decades of occupation, confiscation of land, settlement expansion, demolition of Palestinian homes, killings, imprisonment and deportations of Palestinians from their own land and country. No genuine peace process within the internationally agreed parameters can take place while Israel keeps imposing a *fait accompli* that goes unanswered by the Security Council, and for how much longer? We call on the Security Council to assume its responsibility, move beyond condemnations and put an end to Israeli’s illegal and illegitimate measures, which contravene all the relevant United Nations resolutions adopted by this very Council.

Lebanon is facing multiple challenges because of the absence of a peaceful horizon in the region, the financial and economic crisis and a pandemic that will put its population at grave risk should it overwhelm its medical facilities and supplies. Amid all these serious threats, the Government is trying to find a solution to the current economic impasse. It is working with international financial institutions to put the country back on a recovery trajectory.

The Lebanese authorities have reaffirmed that they remain committed to implementing essential and necessary reforms, and they continue to seek the support

of the international community, especially friendly countries of the region and the world.

In that dire context, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has proved to be an important bastion of stability in southern Lebanon and the region. The recent visit by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon, Mr. Nassif Hitti, to the UNIFIL headquarters is a testament to Lebanon's appreciation of UNIFIL's role and our country's long-standing commitment to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) in its entirety. In that regard, Lebanon once again calls for the renewal of UNIFIL's mission without any changes to its mandate in order to further preserve the relative calm that has been prevailing in its area of operations and to safeguard the stability in the south.

The stability of the south and in all of Lebanon is undermined daily by the continued Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty by land, air and sea in grave violation of resolution 1701 (2006). Just to give an example, from 19 February to 16 June of this year, and during a cruel pandemic, UNIFIL recorded a daily average of 3.7 airspace violations, with 11 daily overflight hours. These repeated violations by Israel further destabilize the situation.

Once again, we call on the Council to take measures to compel Israel to cease its violations of the country's sovereignty and stop increasing the tension in the region. As many members have said in the Council, UNIFIL is a regional public good. Let us empower it by stopping any violations of the resolution that granted UNIFIL its mandate, in accordance with resolution 1701 (2006), to allow this United Nations mission to effectively implement this mandate.

## Annex 36

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein to the United Nations, Christian Wenaweser**

Not for the first time this year, Liechtenstein approaches the quarterly open debate on the Middle East in an atmosphere of grave concern. Foremost among today's issues is the continued spectre of the annexation of parts of the West Bank by Israel. Liechtenstein reiterates its long-held position that the annexation of territory, or any decision to change or amend the border between Israel and Palestine without the explicit consent of both parties, is in violation of international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. Such actions are illegal regardless of the scale or speed of annexation. Far from making Israel more secure, annexation undermines the prospect of a two-State solution based on applicable international law, in particular international humanitarian law, and the relevant Security Council resolutions, which remain the only viable pathway to a sustainable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In all situations Liechtenstein will implement its policy, in accordance with international law, not to recognize as lawful any annexation of territory.

Liechtenstein notes the ongoing proceedings in Pre-Trial Chamber I of the International Criminal Court (ICC) with regard to the situation in Palestine and looks forward to its decision in due course. Such proceedings by a standing and authoritative international court are the expression of an effective international rules-based order, as consistently advocated by a large part of the United Nations membership. Political attacks against the ICC can only intend to weaken the rule of law, undermine multilateralism and strengthen the rule of might — a trend that we are determined to oppose, along with many others. We will therefore continue our support for the ICC in providing justice undeterred and with confidence of its broadly supported mandate.

Liechtenstein regrets the withdrawal of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) — decisions that undoubtedly make the world a less safe place. The JCPOA was a milestone achievement of multilateral diplomacy that strengthened the international rules-based order and achieved concrete results in terms of nuclear non-proliferation. Full compliance with its terms needs to be restored. Liechtenstein also recalls that resolution 2231 (2015) remains in force and therefore continues to be binding on all States, with a special responsibility for all members of the Security Council.

We closely followed the process leading to the adoption of resolution 2533 (2020), which will allow millions in north-western Syria, particularly in and around Idlib, to continue to receive aid. However, the process of arriving at the resolution demonstrated once again that the Council was unable to muster the political will to prioritize the protection of the Syrian people, even if the humanitarian necessities are perfectly clear, and to agree on measures that are commensurate with the challenge at hand. Based on the information available, we must conclude that the agreement found within the Council is likely to exacerbate the humanitarian suffering in the country, falling short of bringing more permanent relief.

We thank those members of the Security Council who put their collective weight behind achieving this minimal solution for the continued cross-border delivery of aid, in particular the co-penholders. In contrast, the use of the veto by two permanent members of the Council to block two previous draft resolutions put forward by the co-penholders, and subsequently ensure an end to aid deliveries through the Bab Al-Salam and Al-Yarubiyah border crossings, is deplorable. We are concerned that people in northern Aleppo and north-eastern Syria will suffer due to these actions, just as they have done as a result of the 14 previous vetoes regarding

the situation in Syria over the past seven years. It is long past time that such flagrant use of the veto be met with a response from the wider membership, including through action in the General Assembly.

Despite the fact that the membership has predominantly and clearly expressed itself on the need to ensure accountability for the worst crimes committed in Syria, the Security Council continues to ignore the call for a referral to the ICC. In that context, the decision to create the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 in late 2016 is increasingly relevant in the quest to bring about a measure of justice for the atrocities that have been committed in Syria. The International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism's diligent work is a constant reminder of the central role of criminal accountability in any political process aimed at sustainable peace and genuine reconciliation in Syria. Liechtenstein welcomes the clear commitment to that effect by the participants of the fourth Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region and remains fully aligned with it.

## Annex 37

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, Syed Mohamad Hasrin Aidid**

I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important open debate.

Malaysia aligns itself with the statements submitted on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (annex 20) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (annex 47).

Allow me at the outset to commend the Security Council for the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020), on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and a global ceasefire, on 1 July. As one of the co-initiators of the joint statement on a global ceasefire that garnered 172 signatories of United Nations Member States and non-member observer States, Malaysia hopes that all provisions of the resolution will be fully implemented by all parties.

The occupying Power, Israel, has continued to openly declare its intention to annex significant parts of the occupied Palestinian territory in the West Bank. Malaysia's position on this matter is crystal clear. Annexation is unlawful. It violates the Charter of the United Nations, the Geneva Conventions and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, by which the acquisition of territory by war or force is inadmissible.

The annexation will only exacerbate Israel's mass human rights and international humanitarian law violations against the Palestinians. Israel's inhumane and discriminatory policies and practices in favour of illegal settlers would continue to harm our Palestinian brothers and sisters. More Palestinians will face, in addition to the illegal property demolition and confiscation as a result of illegal settlements, greater restrictions on their natural resources, water and agricultural land. In short, annexation would do untold damage to Palestinian livelihoods and development.

The international community cannot remain indifferent and silent over the latest aggression by Israel against the occupied Palestinians. Malaysia calls on the international community, in particular the Security Council, to fulfil without delay its Charter responsibility towards the Palestinians. The Security Council must condemn and reject the Israeli annexation plan and ensure that the plan will never be implemented.

There is no military solution to the Palestinian question. The provocative actions taken by Israel will only aggravate the situation. Malaysia therefore strongly urges the Israeli Government to desist from pursuing a military solution. A just, comprehensive and lasting solution is possible only through a negotiated political settlement — a process that the international community, and this body, must actively pursue. That must include the complete withdrawal of Israel from Palestinian land occupied since 1967, including the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif. We also reaffirm our support for establishing an independent State of Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. Only the implementation of all international resolutions on the Palestinian issue can guarantee lasting peace between Israel and Palestine. We call once again on Israel, the occupying Power, to comply with resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 2334 (2016) and all other relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Malaysia will also continue to stand in solidarity with the Government and the people of Palestine, including in their efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. To assist Palestinians in its efforts to prepare for and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, we contributed a million face masks, 500 face shields and 500,000 rubber hand gloves to the Palestinian Government. We also pledged a financial contribution

to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East last month, in support of the Agency's work and operations, and we call on the international community to strengthen the support to the Agency.

Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains key to sustainable peace in the Middle East. But one thing is certain: a sustained peace between Palestine and Israel cannot be realized if further annexation is allowed to take place. Thus, accountability and an end to impunity must become an immediate priority for the international community. As Members of the United Nations, we have a solemn political and moral responsibility to defend the rules-based international order and immediately address such threats to international peace and security.

The international community must continue to uphold the legitimate right to self-determination, which has constituted one of the very core principles of the United Nations since its creation 75 years ago. Malaysia stresses the need for the Council to act urgently in the light of the deteriorating situation on the ground to address the root cause of the conflict and finally put an end to the longest occupation in modern history.

**Annex 38****Statement by the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations**

[Original: Arabic]

Let me first congratulate the delegation of Germany on its successful presidency of the Security Council during the month of July. I also wish to thank the delegation of France for presiding over the Council during the month of June. We thank Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his briefing.

The world today is experiencing an exceptional situation shaped by the outbreak of the novel coronavirus. That situation is compounding the suffering of the Palestinian people, who live under Israeli occupation, have poor health facilities and rely largely on humanitarian assistance, including food and medical supplies.

In spite of those constraints and its limited means, the Palestinian Authority is taking practical steps and doing everything in its power to combat the pandemic, in particular by introducing a lockdown, carrying out testing and quarantining infected persons and their contacts.

Faced with such a state of affairs, all sides have an obligation to respond to the Secretary-General's call for a comprehensive ceasefire, which Morocco supports. My delegation welcomes the joint appeal made by the Secretary-General's envoys to the Middle East addressed to all parties to the region's conflicts.

The Palestinian people continue to live under Israeli occupation, and their legitimate rights are violated on a daily basis. Practices that contravene internationally recognized resolutions and international humanitarian law persist in the Palestinian territories. The decision by the Israeli Government to annex parts of the West Bank is a case in point.

Morocco considers that such steps would compromise the internationally agreed principle of a two-State solution and undermine all efforts to achieve the just and comprehensive peace to which the international community aspires.

Under the judicious leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chair of the Al-Quds Committee, Morocco will always be a key supporter of the just cause and legitimate rights of the Palestinian people as they endeavour to fulfil their aspiration to live in freedom and dignity.

Morocco emphasizes that it is fully committed to peace as a strategic choice for resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It is firmly convinced that negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides remain the only viable way to reach a just and lasting solution to the conflict, one that would enable the Palestinian people to exercise their legitimate right to establish an independent viable and sovereign State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Morocco also renews its urgent call to intensify efforts, in conjunction with international actors and peace-loving forces in the world, to safeguard the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, confront Israeli practices contrary to international law and work to relaunch a constructive dynamic of peace that would enable all the peoples of the region to live in security, stability and harmony.

Morocco firmly believes that East Jerusalem is part of the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 and is the capital of the State of Palestine. East Jerusalem is therefore one of the final-status issues that must be addressed through negotiations



between Palestinians and Israelis. It lies at the heart of the conflict in the Middle East and is central to achieving any political solution between Palestinians and Israelis.

Accordingly, Morocco rejects any unilateral actions that undermine the legal and historical status of Jerusalem as holy city and cradle of the three monotheistic religions. Such actions are contrary to resolutions 476 (1980) and 478 (1980). Morocco also reaffirms the importance of halting settlement activity and implementing resolution 2334 (2016).

With regard to Palestine refugees, Morocco reiterates its support for the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and its efforts to alleviate the suffering of refugees throughout the region and facilitate their access to basic services, in particular children's education and medical care, especially in these exceptionally difficult circumstances with the spread of the coronavirus.

For its part, the Bayt Mal Al-Quds Al-Sharif Agency, the executive branch in the field of the Al-Quds Committee, continues to support the city's people through a range of key projects, concerning in particular cultural and urban heritage conservation, social assistance and the preservation of the Palestinian national archives.

Morocco continues to believe that there is a solution to the Palestinian question. The stalling of talks between the Palestinians and Israelis has nonetheless stymied any chance of breaking the cycle of violence, tension and mutual mistrust. It is therefore up to the international community to effectively and creatively summon the will to revive negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis so as to achieve a two-State solution within the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine. Those negotiations must be based on proper foundations, in accordance with a specified time frame that restores trust between the parties, paving the way for the establishment of a viable Palestinian State living side by side with Israel in peace and security, in line with internationally recognized resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. Morocco also appreciates the efforts of various States to establish lasting peace and security in the Middle East.

## Annex 39

### Statement by the Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations, Neville Melvin Gertze

I congratulate Germany on its assumption the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July 2020, and I thank you, Sir, for organizing this quarterly debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

I would also like to thank Special Coordinator Nickolay Mladenov for his comprehensive and detailed briefing.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements submitted by the delegation of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and by the Permanent Representative of Senegal, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (annexes 20 and 24, respectively).

As the world battles the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, Israel continues with its settlement-expansion policy as well as the destruction of Palestinian structures, displacing men, women and children. I take this opportunity to remind Israel that settlements are illegal under international law and represent an obstacle to peace and the two-State solution.

I also take this opportunity to welcome the 9 June decision of the Israeli High Court of Justice to strike down a 2017 law that enabled widespread expropriation of private Palestinian land and the retroactive legalization, under Israeli law, of thousands of housing units in Israeli settlements.

While settlement expansion and the destruction of Palestinian-owned properties represent an obstacle to peace, the greatest threat to the two-State solution is that of annexation of parts of the West Bank. Namibia is extremely concerned at the proposal put forward by Prime Minister Netanyahu to begin annexation of parts of the West Bank. Any annexation would have serious implications in terms of international law, the two-State solution and the prospects for a negotiated, sustainable peace, as reiterated by the Secretary-General.

Taking unilateral steps in any conflict will not bring about peace and stability. It will only create further division and tensions. As the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process warned in his briefing to the Security Council on 24 June:

“Annexation could irrevocably alter the nature of Israeli-Palestinian relations. It risks upending more than a quarter of a century of international efforts in support of a future viable Palestinian State living in peace, security and mutual recognition with the State of Israel.” (*S/2020/596, annex 2*)

It also represents a threat to regional and international peace and security. We therefore call on and urge the Israeli Government to refrain from taking such steps. We also call on the international community to remain committed to the rule of international law and all United Nations resolutions, particularly resolution 2334 (2016), and to the international compromise on a just solution for the Palestine question.

COVID-19 represents a dire challenge for the Palestinian people. Namibia is particularly concerned about the situation of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, where the health system continues to face immense challenges. As of April 2020, 44 per cent of essential medicines and 30 per cent of essential medical supplies in the Strip had less than a month's stock remaining. The COVID-19 pandemic has also damaged Gaza's economy across all sectors. While the Palestinian people experience the same

effects and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic as the rest of the world, it should be recalled that their Government's ability to respond to its effects in the same way as an independent, sovereign State is far more challenged.

I would like to express my deep appreciation for the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Its provision of vital services represents a stabilizing element in a region that continues to be the victim of violence. The importance of the Agency has only been reinforced through the essential emergency assistance it has provided to help Palestinian refugees confront the COVID-19 pandemic.

I call on the Security Council to remain dedicated to its Charter obligations by upholding its responsibilities and duties. If any form of annexation of the West Bank were to take place, Namibia would urge the Council to act urgently in response to any such action that would not only violate international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, the Fourth Geneva Convention and Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, but would also represent a threat to regional and international peace and security.

I conclude by reiterating Namibia's long-standing and fervent support for, and solidarity with, the Palestinian people. The people of Palestine have fundamental rights to self-determination and independence. We must achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace between Israelis and Palestinians, with the establishment of the two-State solution, with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine, based on the pre-1967 borders.

**Annex 40****Statement by the Chargé d'affaires of Nigeria to the United Nations,  
Samson Sunday Iteboje**

Let me, at the outset, thank Germany for convening this important debate.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement submitted by the delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (annex 20), but nonetheless wishes to make the following additional remarks in its national capacity.

It has become a periodic ritual for Member States to meet to discuss the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine, without any concrete forward movement. Despite the fact that there has not been any traction in negotiations and that tensions between the Israelis and Palestinians continue to be sustained, we must not give in to despair. For our part, Nigeria will continue to join others in giving voice to the need for a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to this protracted crisis.

Nigeria's position on this issue remains constant. We call for a two-State solution heralding a viable, contiguous Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, based on 1967 borders, in accordance with numerous United Nations and Security Council resolutions. We wish once again to appeal to States with influence over the parties concerned to muster enough political will and encourage the two parties' re-engagement in dialogue based on relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Quartet road map, the Arab Peace Initiative and other existing agreements. We once again wish to renew this appeal for influential States to muster enough political will and bring the parties to the negotiating table.

We must begin to think out of the box in order to find innovative ways to address the prevailing challenges and gaps for the implementation of all relevant United Nations and Security Council resolutions on this subject matter. To this end, we once again call on Israel to take concrete steps to freeze all settlement-related activities in the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem as a confidence-building measure, while the State of Palestine, for its part, should embark upon confidence-building measures by signalling, first of all, their readiness to return to the negotiating table. They should also deal with acts of militancy to allow for efforts to forge unity and peace.

We note that the prolonged absence of a political horizon to resolve the broader conflict has coincided with a steady deterioration of the living conditions of the Palestinians. The situation is further exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, with the Palestinian Authorities reporting 862 confirmed cases of virus infections, with 174 recoveries and three fatalities as of 13 July 2020. We express deep appreciation for the invaluable work of the Non-Aligned Movement through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, including its essential emergency assistance that enables refugees to confront the COVID-19 pandemic.

Once again, my delegation reiterates its call on the international community to continue to support and encourage Israel and Palestine to embrace the peace process as a means of resolving the lingering conflicts.

In conclusion, we wish to re-echo our firm belief that achieving lasting peace in the Middle East will depend not on bullets or blockades but on determination and the commitment to making painful sacrifices in support of peace. This would bring about much desired peace and justice, reduce threats to regional and international peace and security and create more development vistas for both States.

## Annex 41

### Statement by the Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations, Mona Juul

Let me first make two comments — on the conflicts in Syria and Yemen — before focusing on the Middle East peace process.

On Syria, we are relieved by the adoption of resolution 2533 (2020) but regret that the Council decided to further limit the scope of the existing mechanism. We are gravely concerned about the potential impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, a dire economy and the reported looming famine. All parties, in particular the Syrian regime and its backers, must cease all hostilities and ensure the protection of civilians and humanitarian access. There is no military solution to the conflict. We reiterate our full support for Special Envoy Pedersen and a political settlement in line with resolution 2254 (2015).

Norway is deeply concerned about the military escalation in Yemen, as well as the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and the condition of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. We support the efforts of the United Nations Special Envoy and urge the parties to commit to a ceasefire, engage in political consultations and agree on urgent humanitarian and economic measures. A lasting peace in Yemen is urgently needed, and only an inclusive political solution can end the conflict and the humanitarian crisis.

On 2 June, Norway and the European Union co-chaired a virtual ministerial meeting of the international donor group for Palestine, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians (AHLIC), with the participation of the two parties and the donors. The meeting was held in the context of political developments that have negatively affected the cooperation between the parties amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and a fiscal crisis that threatens the existence of the Palestinian Authority.

Palestinian economic and institutional development continue to be constrained by a combination of factors. In addition, the COVID-19 crisis has caused serious negative repercussions for the Palestinian economy. There is an urgent need for improved fiscal arrangements that will ensure regular and predictable monthly transfers to the Palestinian Authority and for continued financial support from donors. The safety and health of the Palestinian population must be ensured, and their property protected from attacks.

There is a need to ensure prompt delivery of humanitarian supplies to the Palestinian population, and in particular to protect all efforts aimed at preventing further aggravation of the COVID-19 crisis. In addition, the Palestinian Authority should ensure, to the greatest extent possible, that salary payments to public employees in Gaza and the West Bank be made. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East remains indispensable. It is vital that donors continue their support to the Agency.

For decades, donors have remained committed to improving the institutional and economic conditions so as to favour a negotiated two-State solution. In the AHLIC meeting, donors confirmed their continued support for a negotiated two-State solution and Palestinian economic development. However, their support alone cannot bring about a solution or stand as a substitute for a political process. The current threats and impediments to both economic and political progress must be reversed.

Norway has on several occasions warned against Israeli annexation of parts of the West Bank. Annexation violates international law and would undermine the

possibility of establishing a contiguous Palestinian State and damage the prospects of achieving a lasting peace.

We echo the call by Secretary-General Guterres to the Security Council on 24 June (S/2020/596, annex 1), in which he urged the parties to commit to a meaningful dialogue and all the supporters of the two-State solution to help bring the parties back to a path towards a lasting settlement. Existing agreements and relevant United Nations resolutions should form the basis for the resumption of talks. Under the Oslo Accords, the parties undertook to resolve all outstanding issues, including borders, security, refugees and Jerusalem, in the final-status negotiations. There is a strong international consensus that only a negotiated two-State solution can lead to a durable peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

**Annex 42****Statement by the Permanent Mission of Peru to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

We welcome the holding of today's quarterly open debate on the situation in the Middle East, and especially the presence of the State Secretary. We also thank the briefers for their thoughtful briefings.

We have been following with deep concern the developments surrounding the question of Palestine, in particular the announcements of unilateral actions that could lead to serious consequences for the stability of the Middle East and, by extension, for the world. Peru joins the majority of States, regional organizations and civil society organizations in calling on Israel to rescind its plans for annexation. If implemented, these plans would be a flagrant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations and seriously undermine the prospects for a viable Palestinian State, a situation that the international community cannot and must not tolerate.

In these delicate circumstances, we wish to reaffirm our commitment to the only solution that we consider consistent with international law: that of two States with internationally recognized and secure borders, negotiated directly between Israel and Palestine on the basis of the borders in force until 1967, which must, moreover, lead to the determination of the final status of Jerusalem. This requires, *inter alia*, that respectful actions be taken in the political, religious and social spheres, with a view to building mutual trust so that a constructive dialogue may be resumed. The leaders of both parties are responsible for showing concrete signs of moderation and commitment to peace.

It is also necessary that the Israeli Government put an end to the practices of settlement, demolition of buildings and evictions in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, which undermine the two-State solution and contravene the provisions of the Council adopted in resolution 2334 (2016). We are concerned in particular about plans to expand settlements in Har Homa, East Jerusalem, which would further affect the connectivity of the occupied Palestinian territory.

Peru reaffirms its recognition of Israel's right to preserve its own existence and security by exercising self-defence. We strongly condemn the continued firing of rockets, mortars and incendiary devices, which endanger the lives of Israeli civilians and cause material damage. Palestinian militants must cease such practices immediately.

In this context, we underline the urgency of the parties agreeing to the global ceasefire called for by Secretary-General António Guterres as an essential measure to prevent and mitigate the devastating effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and to strengthen diplomatic action, in line with the important resolution 2532 (2020), recently adopted by the Council. With regard to the pandemic, we wish to commend the outstanding work of the United Nations and its agencies in support of the Palestinian Government. We also look forward to more fluid cooperation between Israel and Palestine in providing an effective response to this scourge.

We draw particular attention to the grave humanitarian crisis in Gaza, which has been exacerbated by COVID-19 and which serves as a breeding ground for radicalization and extremism. We believe that the provision of basic goods and services, the development of infrastructure projects that generate employment and efforts to overcome the confinement of millions of Palestinians must remain priorities for the international community. To this end, we stress the critical state of

the finances of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the need to provide it with a stable and predictable flow of resources. In this regard, we commend the leadership of Jordan and Sweden in mobilizing the solidarity of the international community last June, with pledges that will alleviate the financial shortfalls of that crucial body.

We consider it equally indispensable to advance the process of intra-Palestinian reconciliation. We stress the efforts made by Egypt in this regard and the importance of the Security Council following them closely and providing the necessary support.

In order to resolve the question of Palestine and promote sustainable peace in the Middle East, it is necessary to act in accordance with international law and the United Nations Charter. The trust and credibility required for any good-faith negotiations necessarily include respect for the rule of law and minimum standards of coexistence. We welcome the willingness expressed by various countries to use their good offices, particularly those that have historically participated in this process. We emphasize the need to revitalize the Middle East Quartet and the validity and relevance of the Arab Peace Initiative.



**Annex 43****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations, Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, I wish to congratulate the German State Secretary on his country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month. We appreciate his efforts and those of his predecessor, the Permanent Representative of France. We also thank the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process for his comprehensive briefing and valuable efforts.

Qatar has consistently stressed the importance of this quarterly debate and has been an eager participant in it, as we are convinced that the United Nations, and particularly the Security Council, has a vital role to play in peacekeeping, security and the resolution of the many crises afflicting the Middle East region — of which Qatar is a part — as they strive to promote security, stability and prosperity.

Since the previous debate (see S/2020/341), the world's attention has remained focused on the enormous common challenge of the crisis caused by the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which should serve as an additional incentive to resolve crises in the Middle East peacefully, given the pandemic's health-related, political, economic and social repercussions. Today, three months after the previous meeting, we again underscore the importance of the Organization's calls for a ceasefire in all conflicts in order to focus on the response to the pandemic and the threats that it poses, which do not distinguish among belligerents.

The risk of destabilization increases with every day that the fundamental issue in the Middle East, namely, the Palestinian question, goes unresolved. Qatar has always stressed its principled support for efforts aimed at achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace and at resolving the Palestinian question. The only way to settle all aspects of the issue is through direct negotiations between the parties, with international support, on the basis of international law, internationally recognized resolutions, the agreed terms of reference, the principle of land for peace and the Arab Peace Initiative, leading to the realization of a two-State solution and the establishment of an independent and viable State of Palestine within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

The occupation of all Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan and the occupied Lebanese territories, must come to an end, as must all settlement activity. Illegal settlements must be dismantled, and measures that alter the character, legal status and demographic composition of Jerusalem must be rescinded. The refugee question must be resolved in a just manner, and the Palestinian people's other inalienable rights must also be upheld. The unilateral annexation by Israel of Palestinian territories occupied illegally in 1967 would deal a blow to the two-State solution and to the prospects of a peaceful settlement, not to mention constituting a violation of international law and Security Council resolutions.

Qatar reiterates its principled position in support of the Palestinian people's quest to exercise their legitimate rights. Qatar supports all efforts to create conditions conducive to peace, including the provision of humanitarian assistance to improve the difficult living conditions and economic circumstances faced by Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Over the past eight years, Qatar has provided more than \$1.2 billion in humanitarian and development assistance in the areas of education, electricity supply, infrastructure enhancement, housing and funding for employment opportunities. This year, it has pledged a grant of \$150 million over

six months, including support for the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. With its contribution — the largest of any Arab State — to the core budget of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, Qatar also continues to play a leading role in supporting the Agency's delivery on its indispensable mandate.

In addition to the Palestinian question, other regional crises have caused great destruction and suffering. The time has come to bring them to an end. In Syria, the Syrian people have endured enough. They and their country have suffered untold damage, and it is time for them to live in security and dignity. It has been shown that attempts to impose a military solution will not end the crisis. Instead, they will further endanger peace, security and stability, leading to more grave violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and to persistent humanitarian need. Qatar renews its call for a solution leading to a political transition that fulfils the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, in accordance with the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex), and for the implementation of resolution 2254 (2015) in its entirety. It also stresses the importance of accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity, in order to ensure that justice is done, that the rights of victims are upheld and that the solution reached is sustainable.

In Libya, the cause of and the solution to the crisis are clear. The illegal militias have carried out an attack on innocent civilian members of the Libyan population and on the legitimate, internationally recognized Government. They have had no compunction about perpetrating grave violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, bombarding health-care facilities, laying landmines and systematically carrying out extrajudicial killings. They have undermined progress towards achieving national unity and resolving the conflict in accordance with the Skhirat Agreement, although the latter has been endorsed by the Security Council, which has recognized the Government formed pursuant thereto as the sole legitimate executive authority in Libya. Alarming, the militias have acted with external support, yet, despite the documented violations of Security Council resolutions, the international community has remained silent.

While such dangers persist in Libya, with serious repercussions for the unity of its people, its territorial integrity and international peace and security, the only way to resolve the crisis is to support the Government of National Accord and commit to implementing the Skhirat Agreement, Security Council resolutions and the outcomes of the Berlin Conference. A political solution will succeed only if there is a clear and effective international mechanism in place to ensure that all agreements are implemented.

Accordingly, Qatar calls for a solution to the crisis in Libya that preserves the country's sovereignty and unity and meets the aspirations and interests of all of the country's people, not merely those of certain parties with special interests and personal ambitions. That outcome is to be achieved through a return to negotiations and national dialogue devoid of tendentious external agendas and illegal foreign interference. We also support the efforts of the United Nations and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya.

Qatar looks forward to the day when the Yemeni people will turn the page on this painful chapter and overcome the current tragedy. There is an urgent need to address the humanitarian and economic needs of the Yemeni people, whose humanitarian crisis has reached catastrophic proportions, is causing further instability and poses a threat to peace and security in the region. The time has come to reach a settlement, to achieve a political solution to the crisis and to attain national reconciliation through comprehensive dialogue, in line with resolution 2216 (2015), while preserving the unity of Yemen and bringing security and stability to the country. In that connection,

we reiterate our support for the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen in his efforts to implement his mandate.

Against the backdrop of the multiple grave crises that endanger peace, security and stability in the Middle East, Qatar has for the past three years faced an arbitrary blockade and illegal unilateral measures that contravene the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of international law, international instruments and human rights, in addition to harming the public interest.

On the third anniversary of the cyberpiracy crime that initially sparked the crisis on 23 May 2017, the start of illegal proceedings and the imposition of the unjust blockade on 5 June 2017, everyone has realized that the blockading States' justification and cover for those violations was flimsy and false. Nobody is fooled.

While the blockading countries have continued to blatantly disregard the principles and the Charter of the United Nations and international law, those very principles have formed the basis of the Qatari approach to the crisis. Qatar has invoked international law to protect the rights of Qatari citizens and residents who have been adversely affected by the illegal actions taken against the country. It has appealed to international forums and judicial bodies, chief among them the International Court of Justice as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. Last week, the court rejected appeals by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt over the jurisdiction of the International Civil Aviation Organization to consider the complaint by Qatar that the blockading States had closed their airspace to Qatari aircraft, in flagrant violation of international law and the relevant international conventions. The ruling is one of a series in the country's favour, including a court order issued in 2018 and 2019 on the violation by the United Arab Emirates of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. In June, the World Trade Organization (WTO) ruled that Saudi Arabia had violated its obligations under the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights by refusing to take action against, and even encouraging, the complex piracy of beoutQ. These judicial rulings attest to the integrity of the legal position of Qatar and the nullity of the actions taken against the country.

Those illegal and unjustified actions and the ongoing malicious campaign notwithstanding, Qatar is committed to seeking to resolve the crisis peacefully and diplomatically, through mediation and constructive and unconditional dialogue, with all States respecting international law and the principle of equal sovereignty. In that connection, we once again express our appreciation for the efforts made by Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait.

In conclusion, given the dire need for peace and stability in the Middle East, all parties must make a serious effort to resolve the crises ravaging the region, which is so vital to the world. Qatar will continue to do everything in its power, in word and in deed, to help to resolve these crises peacefully, serve the interests of the States and the peoples of the region and curb all threats to peace, security and stability in the region and beyond.

**Annex 44****Statement by the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations, Khaled Mohammed H. Almanzlawiy**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the successful German presidency of the Security Council this month. I wish you all the best.

We share the international community's concern that issues related to the Middle East are of the utmost importance to the Council, and we recognize that the situation in the region is serious and that effective and decisive measures are needed. Existing crises worsen and new ones emerge, generating tensions that endanger peace and security. This requires action on the part of the international community to calm tensions, maintain security and stability and find prompt political solutions to and address the causes of long-standing crises in the region.

In that connection, we wish to underscore the principles of conflict resolution adopted by my country in its foreign policy. Chief among those principles are a constant focus on the peaceful settlement of conflicts, preventing escalation and resorting to mediation with high-minded ambition and integrity of purpose. We support the Organization's important role in promoting mediation and preventive diplomacy for the peaceful settlement of regional disputes.

The Security Council has a historic and legal responsibility to implement its resolutions related to the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. At the heart of those resolutions is the establishment of a Palestinian State, in accordance with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and internationally recognized resolutions. We urge the international community to stand firm against the Israeli occupation authorities' provocative policies in the occupied Palestinian territory and their disregard for Security Council resolutions. Any settlement of the conflict must be based on the two-State solution, in accordance with the international terms of reference and the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, which provides for the establishment of the Palestinian State within the borders of 4 June 1967, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, the return of refugees and an end to the Israeli occupation of all Arab territories, including the Syrian Arab Golan and the Lebanese territories.

My country welcomes the Security Council's condemnation of the heinous terrorist attacks recently perpetrated by Houthi coup militias against civilians and civilian sites in Saudi Arabia. It opposes the continued threat posed by Houthi militias to civilian lives. We welcome the convening of a special Security Council meeting on the *FSO SAFER* tanker crisis (see S/2020/721), and we call on the Council to monitor the arrival of United Nations experts at the tanker and to find a lasting solution to the crisis, which the Houthi militias have exploited to achieve political aims, indifferent to the environmental and humanitarian disasters that will befall the southern Red Sea region and my country if no lasting solution is found.

We support United Nations efforts to reach a political solution to the Yemeni crisis in accordance with the three terms of reference, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, the outcomes of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, especially resolution 2216 (2015).

My country supports United Nations efforts to find a political solution to the conflict in Libya, focusing on security, territorial integrity and an end to foreign interference in Libyan internal affairs. We welcome the Egyptian initiative aimed at finding a political solution, establishing a ceasefire and ending the bloodshed. We

call on all Libyan parties to cooperate to find an acceptable solution and a political settlement that restores security and stability in Libya.

My country believes that, in order to achieve peace and stability in the region, Iran must be deterred from its expansionist and subversive policies, which violate and defy international instruments and Security Council resolutions. Examples of those policies, from Syria, Iraq and Lebanon to Yemen, are too numerous to recount in this statement. Most recently, the evidence set out in the ninth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) (S/2020/531) has left the international community in no doubt as to the hostile intentions of Iran in the region. The Security Council and the international community must take the necessary measures to stop the crimes and hostility of the Iranian regime, for which there is solid evidence.

**Annex 45****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Syria to the United Nations, Bashar Ja'afari**

[Original: Arabic]

Yesterday the Israeli occupation forces once again launched a series of attacks, firing guided missiles at the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic over the occupied Syrian Golan. This act of aggression, which gives a morale boost to the remaining pockets of terrorist proxies of Israel, is in flagrant violation of the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces, international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

These attacks would not have taken place had the Security Council not, for several decades, failed to enforce its resolutions related to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and had certain permanent members of the Council not extended unstinting support to the rogue entity, encouraging it to intensify its crimes, violations and acts of State terrorism with impunity.

For 53 years the Israeli occupation entity has continued to occupy Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan, in flagrant disregard for the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the rules of international law and hundreds of United Nations resolutions. It continues to commit grave and systematic violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, amounting to war crimes, such as the forcible transfer of population, the destruction of homes, the confiscation of land and property, the theft of natural resources, the siege of cities and the destruction of crops. In doing so it has benefited from the protection of certain permanent members of the Security Council, chief among them the United States of America.

Under the current Administration, United States support for Israeli expansionist settlement plans has reached an unprecedented level, as evidenced by the United States Administration's provocative occupation deals, its declaration of occupied Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, its recognition of so-called Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Golan and the occupation authorities' attempt to annex territories of the West Bank.

The Syrian Arab Republic, along with the overwhelming majority of Member States, strongly condemns those decisions and considers them as a merely unilateral act undertaken by a party that has neither the status nor the political, legal or moral capacity to decide the fate of the peoples of the world or to dispose of lands that are an integral part of the territories of the Syrian Arab Republic and occupied Palestine.

Syria supports the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State encompassing all of its national territory and its capital, Jerusalem, and the right of refugees to return to their homes in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III). That resolution was adopted after Count Folke Bernadotte was assassinated in Jerusalem by the Zionist Stern Gang for stating, in his report (see S/863) to the Security Council in 1948, that Palestine refugees had the right to return to the cities, villages and homes from which they had been expelled. My country reiterates its demand that Palestine be allowed to become a full-fledged Member of the United Nations.

The citizens of my country living under occupation in the occupied Golan have the right to question whether the United Nations can credibly and effectively uphold their just cause. How could it be otherwise? They can see Israel flouting internationally recognized resolutions demanding that it withdraw from the entire Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967. Has the time not yet come to enforce United



Nations resolutions on the Arab-Israeli conflict? Is it not time for certain members of the Security Council to break free from their contempt for the principles of international law and the provisions of the Charter, all of which repudiate occupation and aggression?

How could it be otherwise? The citizens of the occupied Golan are not seeing any genuine international effort to stop the Israeli settlement campaigns in their territory. Those campaigns include, but are not limited to, confiscating 4,500 dunums of Syrian land to set up a project to build wind turbines to generate power; concluding contracts with and granting permits to the United States Genie Energy Company, whose Executive Board is headed by former United States Vice President Dick Cheney, to drill for oil and plunder natural resources; and coercing our people in the Golan to register land they inherited from their parents and grandparents with the Israel Land Authority under penalty of confiscation. Furthermore, Israel continues its settlement activities and has announced the establishment of a new settlement in the occupied Syrian Golan called Trump Heights. This new settlement was a present from the Prime Minister of the Israeli occupation to American President Trump for his flagrant violation of United Nations resolutions and international law in unilaterally recognizing what he termed Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Golan.

How could it be otherwise? They cannot see any international effort being made to put an end to systematic Israeli violations and repressive and racist policies, including, but not limited to, seeking to organize illegal local elections in the occupied Syrian Golan; refusing to open the Quneitra border to our people in the occupied Syrian Golan who wish to visit their homeland and relatives in Syria; and failing to provide adequate medical care to the people of the Golan amid the coronavirus disease pandemic, which places their lives at further risk. Moreover, the Israeli occupation authorities continue to treat our people in the occupied Syrian Golan in a discriminatory manner because they refuse to carry Israeli identity cards.

How could it be otherwise? They can see no international attempt to put an end to the Israeli occupation's policy of arbitrary detention and mock trials. The most recent instance of this policy was the unjust and arbitrary ruling handed down by the Israeli occupying forces on 10 June, imposing a three-year sentence on the activist Nihal Suleiman Al-Maqt, sister of the released prisoner Sidqi Al-Maqt, the Syrian Mandela, and a resident of Majdal Shams in the occupied Syrian Golan. The ruling is illegal and void because it was issued by an illegal occupation force as part of a series of arbitrary repressive measures against the population of the occupied Golan, in an act of reprisal against their patriotic stand and their commitment to their nation and their Syrian identity. It amounts to an act of retaliation against the valiant Al-Maqt family, a patriotic Syrian family that is resisting occupation and aggression.

My Government emphasizes that the occupied Syrian Golan is an integral part of the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic and that its restoration to the line of 4 June 1967 by all means guaranteed by international law will remain a priority for Syrian policy and a fixed point from which it will not deviate.

Lastly, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that, in order to ensure stability in the Middle East and preserve the credibility of the United Nations, measures must be taken to implement all international resolutions aimed at ending the Israeli occupation of Arab territories, including the Syrian Arab Golan, and compelling Israel to withdraw to the line of 4 June 1967, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including, in particular, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 497 (1981) and 2334 (2016).

**Annex 46****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative and Chargé d'affaires a.i of Turkey to the United Nations, Raziye Bilge Koçyiğit Grba**

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to imperil prospects of peace and stability in the Middle East. At a time when we need a spirit of reconciliation and political determination, Israel's practices in the occupied Palestinian territory undermine the two-State solution and the established parameters for a just and durable peace.

The use of excessive and disproportionate force against civilians, arbitrary arrests, attempts to erode the status of Jerusalem, the inhumane blockade in Gaza and the illegal settlements have all been part of a recurring pattern that severely curtails the fundamental rights and freedoms of Palestinians. During the past few years, Israel has intensified its expansion of illegal settlements throughout the occupied Palestinian territories. We all agree that the settlements undermine the perspective of a two-State solution and lay the foundation for the annexation of these areas.

Today the most immediate and pressing challenge is the Israeli Government's illegal plans for the annexation of the West Bank. The annexation would be a grave violation of international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. It would increase the grievances and suffering of Palestinians at the hands of the occupying Power. Palestinian land and the people of Palestine should not be sacrificed for the sake of Israel's brazen policies of violence and occupation.

An overwhelming majority of the international community objected to Israel's plans. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation Executive Committee meeting held on 10 June delivered a strong message against Israel's initiatives for annexation and provided its full support to the Palestinian people in their quest for justice. This message should be supported by all members of the international community to prevent Israel from taking this dangerous step. We once again urge the Israeli Government to immediately cease its illegal settlement activities and not to proceed with its illegal annexation plans.

The situation in the Gaza Strip is also deeply worrisome. Gazans, who are under blockade, continue to live in tremendous despair and insecurity. This tragedy is compounded by the coronavirus disease pandemic and the worst financial crisis in the history of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). The Palestinian Government has implemented effective public health measures against the spread of the virus. We welcome and support these measures.

Yet decades of Israeli occupation and blockade have severely damaged the Palestinian economy, infrastructure and health system. As in the rest of the world, the public health restrictions have had serious effects on the economy of Palestine. We therefore call on the Government of Israel to fulfil its responsibilities.

We also call upon the international community to support UNRWA. Until a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestine conflict is reached, the work of UNRWA remains vital. It is our collective and moral duty to support the Agency.

Inaction in the face of persistent non-compliance with international law and Security Council resolutions emboldens Israel's recklessness. The international community, in particular the Security Council, cannot turn a blind eye to the situation. There is an urgent need to revitalize the peace process.

The only viable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the two-State solution based on the 1967 lines, with Palestine and Israel living side by side.



The rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination, are not up for negotiation.

For decades, the basis for peace negotiations have been the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map. This was explicitly reaffirmed in resolution 2334 (2016). These terms of reference should be upheld. Any initiative for peace should be based on these established parameters.

It is high time that the international community uphold the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, ensuring that they live in a free Palestine in peace and dignity. Turkey's firm commitment to stand with its Palestinian brothers and sisters remains as strong as ever.

## Annex 47

### **Statement by the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation**

I have the honour to submit this statement on behalf of the member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in my capacity as Chair of the OIC Group.

At the outset, I thank Germany for its successful presidency of the Security Council this month. I would also like to thank the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, for his comprehensive briefing.

When we had our last open debate on this topic in April 2020 (see S/2020/341), we were optimistic regarding the positive responses around the world to the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire to confront the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We hoped the international community would take this moment to focus on this unprecedented global challenge. However, countries in the Middle East continue to face security issues that hinder our efforts to respond effectively to the pandemic.

An acute example is the occupied Palestinian territories. At a time when there is a worrisome rise in COVID-19 cases, Israel's plan to unilaterally annex vast swathes of the occupied Palestinian territories remain a looming threat. OIC member States are deeply concerned about these developments, which pose health, economic, social and security challenges in the territories. On 24 June 2020, Mr. Mladenov informed the Security Council that "... there is still time to avert chaos. It will require a concerted effort by all stakeholders and the will to take political risks to achieve peace." (S/2020/596, *annex 2*) We are determined to support the Palestinian people and protect the two-State solution, with a Palestinian State living side by side with Israel in peace, security and mutual recognition.

To achieve these goals, the OIC calls on the Security Council and Member States to pursue the following priorities.

First, we must salvage the prospects for peace. As a priority, the international community must continue to exert pressure on Israel to prevent annexation plans, which violate international law, the Charter of the United Nations and relevant United Nations resolutions. OIC member States have repeatedly stated their rejection of annexation. We reiterate that such unilateral actions undermine the peace process and would have grave consequences for the stability and security of the region and beyond. In this vein, OIC member States demand that Israel stop all its illegal actions, including wall and settlement construction, land confiscation and the demolition of homes and properties. Israel must also end its illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip, which imposes severe humanitarian consequences for the Palestinian people.

In addition, we reiterate our concerns about Israeli restrictions on access to Islamic and Christian holy sites in the city of Jerusalem. In this regard, OIC member States commend the efforts of His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, Custodian of Islamic and Christian holy sites in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, in defending, protecting and preserving the city and its Islamic and Christian identity. We also commend the continued efforts exerted by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, and welcome the appeal signed by His Majesty King Mohammed VI and Pope Francis in Rabat on 30 March 2019, as it calls for Al-Quds to be a city of peace, fraternity and tolerance, considering the city a symbol of coexistence of the followers of the three monotheistic religions.

Secondly, we need to break the deadlock in the political process. OIC member States encourage the Quartet and other key international actors to work towards launching a credible, time-bound and multilaterally sponsored political process, in accordance with the established terms of reference. In addition, the Security Council has a crucial role to play in supporting a just and comprehensive solution to the conflict.

Thirdly, we should assist the occupied Palestinian territories in responding effectively to the pandemic. Support should focus on enhancing the capacity of the health system, particularly in the Gaza Strip, in addition to mitigating the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic. We strongly encourage funding the COVID-19 response plan in the occupied Palestinian territory and the flash appeal for the COVID-19 response of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Equally important is ensuring access to essential medical supplies and humanitarian aid for those in need.

Finally, we must address the deterioration of the humanitarian and economic situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. OIC member States are concerned about the fragile economic situation in the territories, which is further exacerbated by COVID-19 and the occupation. Around a quarter of Palestinians already live below the poverty line. This percentage could increase given that the World Bank predicts the economy will decline: "... at least 7.6 per cent, based on a gradual return to normality from the containment, and up to 11 per cent in the case of a slower recovery or further restrictions due to another outbreak." The international community should not ignore such alarming trends, which severely impact the livelihood of Palestinians and the peace effort.

In conclusion, we reiterate our call to support the Palestinian people in exercising their legitimate rights, including their right to self-determination and sovereignty over the territory of the State of Palestine, based on the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. In addition, we call for Israel's full withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan to the borders of 4 June 1967, in accordance with Security Council resolutions. We further affirm the need to preserve the unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity and social harmony of Syria, and reiterate our support for a political solution to the Syrian crisis, consistent with resolution 2254 (2015).