



Security Council

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Letter dated 21 October 2021 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 refer to the 8883rd meeting of the Security Council, convened on 19 October 2021 under the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”. The interventions of the briefers, the members of the Council, the Observer State of Palestine and Israel will be published as an official record of the Security Council (S/PV.8883).

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members for the 8883rd meeting, the following delegations and entities submitted written statements, copies of which are enclosed: Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brazil, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, the European Union, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. Those statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council in accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, and reference to the document will be made in S/PV.8883.

(Signed) Martin **Kimani**
President of the Security Council



Annex 1**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations**

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the 120 States members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Permanent Mission of Kenya on its successful presidency of the Security Council this month and to express our gratitude for the 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 and remains one of the longest-standing items on the Security Council's agenda.

This year, during the Online Mid-term Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, held on 13 and 14 July under the theme "Non-Aligned Movement at the centre of multilateral efforts in responding to global challenges", the ministers adopted a political declaration, stressing, inter alia, that a just, lasting and peaceful solution to all aspects of the question of Palestine, based on the internationally endorsed parameters enshrined in the relevant United Nations resolutions, must remain a priority on the Movement's agenda and an ongoing responsibility of the United Nations until it is satisfactorily resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

In that regard, the States members of the Movement take this opportunity to once again reaffirm that this ongoing historic injustice, with the over 54-year Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory and other Arab territories at its core, continues to pose a serious threat to regional and international peace and security and requires urgent attention and action, in accordance with international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the Charter of the United Nations. The international community cannot remain paralysed on this issue and cannot accept arguments that this issue is "intractable" or that peace "is not possible" at this time. The international consensus on a just solution is firm and clear, and we have multilateral political and diplomatic tools to promote the achievement of a peaceful resolution and must use them responsibly and urgently.

The Security Council in particular has a clear responsibility for ensuring the maintenance of international peace and security. It must uphold its Charter duties and must act to implement its own resolutions, which constitute the foundation for a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the conflict. The question of Palestine cannot be the exception to international law and to the authority of the Security Council. We therefore remain deeply concerned that, for too long, this organ has been unable to fulfil its mandate on this important question, particularly due to the use of the veto by one permanent member. The members of the Movement call on the Security Council to overcome its paralysis and fulfil its Charter duties towards the Palestine question, restoring credibility to this organ and upholding its obligations towards the achievement of a just and peaceful solution to this protracted conflict and tragic injustice.

The Non-Aligned Movement still believes that resolution 2334 (2016), which reaffirmed the Security Council's many relevant resolutions on the matter, provides the only viable path to peace, setting forth the essential requirements and parameters for the achievement of a just outcome on the basis of the two-State solution based on the 1967 lines, in accordance with the long-standing terms of reference of peace endorsed by the international community, namely, the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map, and ensuring the fulfilment by the

Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, including to self-determination and the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We therefore reiterate NAM's call for full respect for resolution 2334 (2016) and for the effective implementation of its provisions and obligations, particularly by the occupying Power, including in terms of States' obligations with regard to distinction, which is a matter central to ensuring accountability. We also underscore the need for the intensification of international and regional diplomatic efforts aimed at bringing an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive solution, as also called for in resolution 2334 (2016) and call on the Security Council to examine all practical ways and means to ensure its implementation, as it has pledged to do.

Similarly, the States members of the Movement continue to call for full respect for, and the implementation of, all other relevant resolutions, including with regard to the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities and the status of occupied East Jerusalem, since that would create the necessary conditions for bringing an end to the occupation, justly resolving the conflict in all its aspects and making Palestinian-Israeli peace and security a reality for the benefit of both peoples, the region and the international community as a whole.

It is imperative that action be taken immediately, in line with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, to redress the situation on the ground, which has been marked by rising violence and tensions that must be urgently de-escalated, and to foster an appropriate environment in the pursuit of peace. That must include a halt to all unilateral and unlawful measures, which serve only to embolden Israel to further pursue its illegal policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. Actions that violate the Security Council resolutions and the historic and legal status quo of Jerusalem and its holy sites are provocative and dangerous, destroy the prospects for peace and should not be supported or celebrated by any country. Threats of annexation by Israeli officials and the continued settlement activities and forced displacement of Palestinian families from their homes and lands must be unequivocally condemned. Any measures taken in that regard must be forthwith rejected as null and void and without any legal effect and must be met with firm measures of accountability for such grave breaches, including by lawful countermeasures.

The Non-Aligned Movement calls for full respect for the historical status quo at the holy sites and for the Hashemite historical custodianship exercised by His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, King of Jordan, over the Christian and Muslim holy sites in the city and for the protection of the sanctity of the holy sites.

The Non-Aligned Movement commends the efforts of His Majesty King Mohammed VI as Chair of the Al-Quds Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation. The Movement 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 the need to preserve its specificities and features as a city of peaceful coexistence.

In relation to the Gaza Strip, the situation remains of great concern to the Movement, particularly the grave humanitarian situation, which regrettably continues to deteriorate day by day. The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its call for the complete lifting of the Israeli blockade, which continues to impose untold humanitarian, social and economic suffering on more than 2 million Palestinian children, women and men in Gaza. This crisis must be comprehensively addressed

in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and the relevant United Nations resolutions, and in the context of the unequivocal calls and overriding responsibility to bring an end to the illegitimate, belligerent Israeli foreign occupation of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, since 1967.

In the absence of a solution, the States members of the Movement reiterate their call for the continued provision of the needed humanitarian and socioeconomic assistance to the Palestinian people, including the Palestine refugees. The Non-Aligned Movement therefore stresses the importance of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), along with other United Nations agencies and international organizations, in alleviating their plight, and calls for full support for UNRWA's mandate to ensure the continuity of its vital programmes and its contribution to regional stability. In the light of the continuing financial shortfalls, we urge the international community to provide UNRWA with the necessary funding to ensure the continuity of its indispensable operations in all fields of operation.

As Israel has clearly abdicated on its obligations as the occupying Power to protect the Palestinian civilian population, as prescribed by the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, we also reiterate our long-standing call for international protection for the Palestinian people. This is urgent in order to alleviate the dire state of insecurity of the occupied population and prevent the loss of more innocent human lives. Failure to do that can lead only to further escalations and the tragic loss of more civilian lives.

In that connection, we reiterate our grave concern about the lack of accountability for all the violations committed by Israel, many of which may amount to war crimes. The absence of justice only fosters greater impunity, leads to the recurrence of crimes and destabilizes the situation on the ground, thereby further diminishing the prospects for peace. We continue to call for international action, particularly by the Security Council, to ensure a cessation of, and accountability for, the violations that are being systematically committed by Israel against the Palestinian civilian population under its occupation. We reiterate that Israel must comply with its duties and responsibilities under international law and must be held to account if it continues its blatant contempt of this organ and its international legal obligations.

With regard to the situation in the occupied Syrian Golan, the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms that all measures and actions taken, or to be taken, by Israel, the occupying Power, such as its illegal decision of 14 December 1981 that purports to alter the legal, physical and demographic status and the institutional structure, as well as the Israeli measures to apply its jurisdiction and administration there, are null and void and have no legal effect. In that regard, and in line with our principled position, we once again demand that Israel abide by resolution 497 (1981) and fully withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan to its 4 June 1967 borders, in implementation of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). In addition, we reiterate our condemnation of the unilateral and arbitrary proclamation by the United States of America on recognizing the Golan Heights as part of Israel and renew our call on the Security Council to unequivocally condemn that provocative act.

Moreover, the States members of the Movement emphasize that Israel must withdraw from all Lebanese territories, including Sheba'a Farms, the Kfar Shouba hills and the Lebanese part of Al-Ghajar village up to the Blue Line, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular resolution 1701 (2006).

To conclude, we seize this opportunity to reiterate our call for the international community to act collectively, with responsibility, to uphold international law and to exert and intensify all necessary efforts in support of the just Palestinian cause, the ultimate goal of which is to bring an end to this historic and grave injustice. We reaffirm our commitment to promoting a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects, including for the plight of the Palestine refugees, and reaffirm our support to the Palestinian people in their struggle to achieve justice and fulfil their inalienable rights and legitimate national aspirations, including to self-determination, freedom and independence in their sovereign and independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Annex 2**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations, Jamal Fares Alrowaiei**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya for holding today's important open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. I would also like to thank the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Tor Wennesland, for his valuable briefing.

The Middle East remains in a state of instability and insecurity. The people of a number of its States are experiencing difficulties as a result of ongoing wars, crises and conflicts that have taken lives, displaced millions and destroyed cities, villages and infrastructure. As a result, focused and concerted efforts are required to achieve security, stability, peace and prosperity in the region by adhering to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which provide for non-interference in the internal affairs of States, commitment to good-neighbourliness, mutual respect and the peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as the strengthening of international cooperation.

The path to peace is a strategic approach and option for the Kingdom of Bahrain to bring lasting and comprehensive peace to the region and establish a culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence for the good of the peoples of the region and the world. In that context, the Kingdom of Bahrain emphasizes the importance of action by the international community to bring about a fair and comprehensive resolution of the Palestinian question that fulfils the aspirations of the Palestinian people for an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital in accordance with the principle of a two-State solution, internationally recognized resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, so as to safeguard the right of the Palestinian people to live in a safe, stable and prosperous homeland.

Houthi terrorist militias continue to attack civilians and civilian infrastructure in the fraternal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, systematically and deliberately launching ballistic missiles and drones in clear violation of international humanitarian law. We strongly condemn such terrorist attacks and repeated violations, as well as the militias' insistence on threatening maritime navigation and undermining regional security and stability. The Kingdom of Bahrain supports all measures being taken by the fraternal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to preserve its territorial integrity and protect its citizens and residents and stresses the need for the international community to condemn those heinous hostile acts, which are intended to harm civilians and civilian objects.

The Kingdom of Bahrain supports the Saudi Arabia initiative for a ceasefire in Yemen so that a political solution to the Yemeni crisis can be reached in accordance with the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcomes of the all-inclusive National Dialogue Conference and Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2216 (2015), and so that an end can be brought to the suffering of the Yemeni people.

In conclusion, the great challenges facing the Middle East region compel us to maintain our faith in the need for concerted multilateral action while respecting the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, so that the region may enjoy peace, stability and prosperity.

Annex 3**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, Rabab Fatima**

I congratulate Kenya on its successful stewardship of the work of the Security Council in October. I also thank the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Tor Wennesland, for his informative briefing.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Oman on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (annex 18) and by the representative of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (annex 1). Allow me to add the following points in my national capacity.

While the Security Council holds its open debate on the situation in the Middle East today, Israel, the occupying Power, continues to impose institutionalized discrimination against Palestinians living under its rule in occupied East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza. On 6 October, Israel attempted to divide the Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif, violating both the historic and legal status quo at this holy site and blatantly disrespecting the Islamic Waqf. Such a provocative act comes only months after the Israeli aggression on the Al-Aqsa Mosque last May, which killed 232 Palestinians, including 65 children, 39 women and 17 elderly persons; injured over 1,900 people, many critically; and displaced over 60,000 Palestinians.

Despite the fact that the occupying Power is absolutely forbidden under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 from transferring any of its civilian population into the occupied territory, Israel continues to do so. In the first week of October 2021, Israel announced its illegal settlement plan across occupied Palestine to construct 10,000 settler housing units in the Qalandiya area, north of occupied Jerusalem. That constitutes a flagrant violation not only of international law but also of relevant United Nations resolutions. That would undermine the territorial integrity, viability and contiguity of the Palestinian State — and thus the possibility of the two-State solution.

Such appalling Israeli brutality continues with impunity in the occupied Palestinian territory. This cycle of violence and Israeli aggression is nothing new. Our inaction and failure to hold Israel accountable for its aggression only makes things more vicious. More than seven decades of inaction weigh heavily on the conscience of the Council.

Bangladesh strongly denounces such abhorrent acts of terror. I reaffirm Bangladesh's unflinching commitment to realizing the inalienable rights of the brotherly people of Palestine for an independent homeland, based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Let me reiterate the following priorities.

First, Israel must end its illegal occupation and annexation of Palestinian territory. We call for an immediate halt to the Israeli aggression and urge the international community to take urgent and decisive action to end this cycle of violence and injustice. For now, serious efforts must be made to strengthen the 20 May ceasefire and revitalize the Middle East peace process.

Secondly, decade after decade, there has been an endless longing to end the conflict. However, global mobilization to end Israel's wrongdoing is still lacking. In the current context, such mobilization can be effected only by the Security Council. The absence of any serious political and legal actions by the Council to enforce its standing resolutions that aim to end the decades-long Israeli occupation is neither acceptable nor sustainable and contradicts the Council's Charter duties. The Council

must ensure Israel complies with all international human rights and humanitarian laws and relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016).

Thirdly, the international community, led by the United Nations, must promptly engage in a thorough, serious and firm approach to this conflict for a sustained political and just initiative that upholds Palestinians' human rights in accordance with international law and ends the occupation. The swift implementation of the road map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the efforts of the Quartet are crucial building blocks in that regard.

Fourthly, the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people must be urgently met. Humanitarian and medical personnel, as well as supplies, must have uninterrupted access to the civilian population in the Palestinian territory, including the Gaza Strip. We also need to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) by addressing its perennial funding crisis so as to meet the basic needs of the 5.8 million Palestine refugees registered with the Agency. Solidarity and joint action to mobilize resources will contribute to easing the difficulties facing UNRWA. Bangladesh will continue to support UNRWA with its annual contribution.

Finally, the flagrant violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law and other international accords by the Israeli occupation forces are tantamount to war crimes. Persistent impunity and inaction have only led the Israeli occupation forces to become more violent over the years. Holding the violators accountable would be an important step in finding justice and lasting peace. In that regard, we welcome the developments at the International Criminal Court.

As I conclude, I would like to reiterate Bangladesh's unwavering support for the Palestinian people. We stand firmly with them in achieving their legitimate rights and aspirations. A two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders is the only solution to bring about lasting peace in the region. Bangladesh will support all efforts to that end.

Annex 4

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations

Brazil would like to thank Kenya for organizing this quarterly debate on the situation in the Middle East.

Our position on the question of Palestine is well known. Brazil remains committed to supporting a peaceful resolution of the conflict, based on a two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side-by-side within secure and internationally recognized borders. We are following, attentively and hopefully, the resumption of high-level contacts between the new Israeli Government and Palestinian authorities.

Brazil welcomes gestures such as Israel's granting of additional work permits to Palestinian workers and the lifting of some restrictions on the flow of goods to the Gaza Strip, which are extremely relevant as confidence-building measures. We also welcome the announcement by the Palestinian Authority of the holding of municipal elections. We hope that will be a step towards transparent and inclusive general elections, which are essential to strengthen the legitimacy and credibility of Palestinian institutions.

Brazil attaches great importance to measures that may improve the lives of Palestinian refugees. For hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who live in refugee camps, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is frequently the only source of basic services, such as education and health. As a member of the UNRWA Advisory Commission, we express deep concern over its chronic financial challenges. We reiterate our willingness to cooperate closely with the Agency, especially in the light of the additional challenges posed by the coronavirus disease pandemic.

We believe the momentum created by the Abraham Accords, when old rivalries gave way to unequivocal commitment to dialogue and diplomacy, can forge the path to build unprecedented trust in the Middle East.

Turning to the situation in Syria, we are encouraged by the convening of the Constitutional Committee yesterday, in Geneva, and thank Special Envoy Geir Pedersen for his efforts in that regard. While, after two years since its creation, the Committee has yet to show substantive progress, this week's meeting represents a critical opportunity. Brazil urges the members of the Committee to bridge their differences and engage seriously in drafting a new constitution conducive to peace, stability and reconciliation.

Brazil reaffirms its support for the efforts of Special Envoy Pedersen in facilitating a solution to the conflict under the overarching framework of resolution 2254 (2015). We remain convinced that only a Syrian-owned and -led, United Nations-facilitated political process, with due regard for the preservation of Syria's territorial integrity, will bring about lasting peace and provide relief for the suffering Syrian population.

Brazil reiterates its condemnation of the indiscriminate attacks against civilians, the targeting of medical and humanitarian workers, as well as schools and hospitals, and the forced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and summary killings, which have become all too common throughout the conflict. Additionally, humanitarian exemptions for any sanctions programme related to Syria must be observed to ensure that they do not undermine access to food and essential health supplies for those most in need.

Brazil commends the people and the Government of Iraq for the general elections held peacefully on 10 October. Those elections follow an intense period

of demonstrations in which the Iraqi people raised their voices to call for good governance and the consolidation of democracy. We hope that the new Government, once formed, can respond to their call. Brazil also commends the invaluable support provided by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq, not only through its expanded election-monitoring team but also through the long-term advice and technical assistance it has provided to the Iraqi Government.

In Yemen, we have witnessed a disturbing escalation of violence over the past few months, ranging from the ongoing and alarming Ansar Allah offensive against Ma'rib to the car bomb attack in Aden last week. The impasse surrounding the repair of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker is further cause for concern, and we call on Ansar Allah to allow United Nations-mandated personnel to conduct urgently needed inspections and repairs.

Brazil is extremely concerned by reports from the World Food Programme and other agencies regarding the immediate risk of famine in the country. Guaranteeing safe and unobstructed humanitarian access to all parties is more important than ever. In September, Brazil announced a new financial contribution — of \$75,000 through the World Food Programme — to United Nations humanitarian operations in Yemen for measures related to the coronavirus disease pandemic. We hope that small gestures coming from countries outside the purview of traditional donors can help generate a positive trend towards a more diverse donor base.

It was under these challenging circumstances that Mr. Hans Grundberg assumed his role as the new Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen, in September. Brazil notes his recent trip to Riyadh, Aden and Muscat and wishes him success in this crucial task. We urge all parties to cooperate with the Special Envoy, cease the current escalation of violence and engage in good faith in peace negotiations, without preconditions.

Two months from now, the Libyan people will elect their new leaders in the 24 December parliamentary and presidential elections. That will be an opportunity to move towards national reconciliation and the building of truly representative institutions. For this reason, Brazil welcomes the efforts of Libyan political forces and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya — which recently had its mandate renewed until 31 January 2022 — to respect the electoral schedule. We believe that will be a decisive step for Libya to start a new chapter in its history, one in which the aspirations of its people are at the forefront.

Finally, we cannot conclude without a word about Lebanon. Brazil is deeply concerned about the outbreak of violence we all witnessed last week in the streets of Beirut. We support the efforts of the Lebanese Government to restore calm and dialogue. Brazil reiterates its commitment to Lebanon, a country with which we share historical ties of friendship, highlighted by the expressive presence of the Lebanese diaspora in Brazil.

We have an important record of efforts towards the stabilization of Lebanon. For almost 10 years, under the mandate of resolution 1701 (2006), Brazil had the honour and responsibility to serve as commander of the Maritime Task Force of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. We are proud of this contribution and reiterate our readiness to support Lebanon in overcoming the current crisis.

As we consider the situation in the Middle East, it is necessary to bear in mind that long-term political stability and economic prosperity are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Efforts to support the peaceful resolution of conflicts should be combined with initiatives to promote socioeconomic development, which are key to build resilient and inclusive societies.

Annex 5**Statement by the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Cheikh Niang**

On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, at the outset I would like to congratulate Kenya for its able presidency of the Security Council this month.

As we engage once more in this quarterly debate, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory remains tense. Palestinians continue to be victims of increasing levels of violence and insecurity, recorded by the United Nations, most non-governmental organizations and even the Israeli press. Much of the violence is increasingly perpetrated by illegal Israeli settlers in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, who have stepped up attacks and harassment against the civilian population as well as the establishment of illegal outposts on Palestinian land.

The Committee remains concerned by the continued loss of life and serious injuries, especially to children, in the occupied Palestinian territory. According to the Special Coordinator, from 12 June to 27 September alone, 27 Palestinians, including two women and five children, were killed by Israeli security forces during demonstrations, clashes, security operations and other incidents. During the same period, thousands of Palestinians were injured, including 10 women and 530 children.

The Committee urges further measures to ensure that Israel fulfils its obligations as the occupying Power, in accordance with international humanitarian law, to protect Palestinian civilians from violence, including by Israeli settlers, and to investigate and hold accountable all those responsible for such attacks.

Israeli demolitions and confiscations of Palestinian homes and structures have also continued across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since the Committee's last statement to the Council (see S/2021/91). According to the Special Coordinator's September 2021 statement to the Council (see S/PV.8869), those actions displaced 433 people, including 102 women and 251 children, during the 2 June to 27 September period. The Committee calls on Israel to cease the demolition and seizure of Palestinian property throughout the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in line with its obligations under international humanitarian law and equally in respect of international human rights law.

During September, Palestinians continued to demonstrate in the occupied West Bank to protest the situation of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention, including six Palestinians on hunger strike. On 6 September, the reported escape of six Palestinians from Israel's Gilboa prison, who were later rearrested, ignited protests that escalated into clashes throughout the West Bank and Gaza. The Committee warns that punitive measures by Israel against the Palestinian prisoners and detainees it is holding in its jails risk provoking an open confrontation and escalation of this volatile situation.

Palestinian civil-society organizations continued to face restrictions on their freedoms of expression, assembly and association. On 11 August, Ms. Mary Lawlor, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, noted that arrests and raids on the homes of Palestinian human rights defenders form part of a wider crackdown against those defending the human rights of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory.

We also continue to witness the limitation of access for Palestinian worshippers to sacred sites. For example, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process reported that tensions rose at the Ibrahimi Mosque site, in Hebron's Old City, following a decision by Israeli authorities to temporarily

restrict access for Palestinian worshippers between 21 and 24 September, during the Jewish holiday of Sukkot.

In occupied East Jerusalem, a recent Israeli judicial decision to allow “silent Jewish prayers” in Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif under Israeli police escort risks inflaming an already precarious situation because it constitutes an alteration of the historic and legal status quo at the holy site, which must be respected, as repeatedly demanded by the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Human Rights Council and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

United Nations human rights experts on 13 August called on the Government of Israel to immediately return confidential documents and office equipment that its military seized from the offices of Defense for Children International Palestine in Al-Bireh, in the occupied West Bank. The Committee calls on Israel to take all necessary measures to protect the right to freedom of association and ensure that human rights organizations in the occupied Palestinian territory are protected from such arbitrary actions and repression.

Over six months since the escalation of hostilities between Israel and Hamas, the truce in Gaza remains fragile and reconstruction and recovery remain urgent. The Committee is encouraged by recent efforts to facilitate movement and access to and from Gaza. In particular, the Committee notes the limited easing of access restrictions by the Israeli authorities; the expansion of the fishing zone on 29 July; the easing of import and export restrictions on 13 and 26 August; the issuance of permits to Palestinian traders and businesspeople to cross from Gaza into Israel; and, more critically, permission for construction materials, food and non-food items and fuel to enter Gaza. However, let me reiterate that Gaza requires political solutions that will see a complete lifting of the illegal Israeli blockade, in line with resolution 1860 (2009), and the return of the legitimate Palestinian Government to Gaza, and further recall that Gaza remains an integral part of the occupied Palestinian territory and must be part of an independent, sovereign Palestinian State.

The Committee echoes concerns expressed by many about the Palestinian Authority’s financial position, which, according to the Special Coordinator, has deteriorated in 2021, partly due to Israel’s withholding of additional clearance revenues since July and the ongoing impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic. While the Committee calls on donors to support the Palestinian people, it also urges the Palestinian Authority to implement commensurate reform priorities to improve the fiscal outlook.

The Committee welcomes the announcement that the delayed Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting will be held in November to consider Palestinian needs and financial contributions. In addition, the Committee appreciates Qatar’s contribution of \$40 million to the United Nations to support cash assistance to 100,000 vulnerable families in Gaza and an additional \$10 million per month for the Gaza power plant.

The Committee also commends donors’ response to the United Nations Humanitarian Flash Appeal, which raised \$45 million of the requested \$95 million to support humanitarian aid and recovery for the Gaza Strip. The Committee appreciates, inter alia, the 22 September decision by the Government of the United States of America to release the remaining \$20 million of a total humanitarian aid package of \$75 million for Palestinians earmarked in March of this year.

The annual report to the General Assembly (A/76/13) on the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), presented to the Fourth Committee by its Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini on 5 October, highlighted the Agency’s financial situation, which remains dire and

uncertain, lacking the funds to operate in November and December due to funding reductions by some donors and despite the return of the United States of America this year as a partner and donor to the Agency. A disruption in UNRWA services will deny millions of Palestine refugees, among them many young people, across the region the essential rights of a dignified life: education, health, food and housing. The Committee therefore reiterates its appeal to the international community to provide timely, sufficient and predictable funding to UNRWA so that it can fulfil its General Assembly mandate to assist the Palestine refugees pending a just solution on the basis of resolution 194 (III).

In conclusion, the Committee remains committed to upholding its responsibilities towards the full realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and freedom. It supports the idea of a just solution based on international law and relevant United Nations resolutions that ensures two States, Israel and Palestine, may live side by side in peace and security along the pre-1967 lines and with East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian State. In that regard, the Committee will remain a reliable partner in support of international efforts to create the conditions to garner broader global support for the just resolution of the question of Palestine and the realization of a peaceful and secure Middle East.

Annex 6**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations, Pedro Luis Pedrosa Cuesta**

[Original: Spanish]

We support the statements made by the representatives of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (annex 1), and of Senegal, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (annex 5).

The Secretary-General's urgent call for an end to armed conflicts, hostilities and wars, and for increased opportunities for diplomacy and cooperation, must be heeded so that together we may tackle the devastating coronavirus disease pandemic.

While the Security Council remains inactive, Israel continues its occupation of the Palestinian territories, intensifies its annexation policies and steps up its illegal practices and colonization measures, including the building and expansion of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, punitive demolitions, the forced displacement of hundreds of civilians, the blockade against the Gaza Strip and plans to annex Palestinian territory in the Jordan Valley and other parts of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The repeated obstruction of Security Council action by the United States of America has enabled Israel's impunity and prevented this organ from fulfilling the responsibility entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is time for the Council to take steps to end the Israeli military aggression and occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in accordance with its resolution 2334 (2016).

We reaffirm our full support for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Palestinian people must be allowed to exercise their right to self-determination and to have an independent and sovereign State, within the pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, that upholds the right of return of refugees.

This longstanding call — reiterated by high-level representatives of the vast majority of members of the international community during the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session — must be met as soon as possible.

We express our steadfast solidarity with the Palestinian people and Government. We support the accession of the State of Palestine to full membership in the United Nations and the call by its President for an international peace conference.

In its unjustified and unilateral acts of aggression in the Middle East, the United States continues severely contravening the legitimate interests of Arab and Islamic nations and fuelling a dangerous escalation in the region.

We reiterate our rejection of the so-called "deal of the century" devised by the United States Government, which ignores the two-State solution, long-supported by the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and other international actors.

The unilateral decision by the Government of the United States to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, to establish its diplomatic presence in that city with disregard to its historical status, as well as to recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Syrian Golan represent serious violations of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and relevant Security Council resolutions. The current United States Government has not reversed those decisions, which further undermine the possibility of a negotiated solution.

We call for Israel's complete and unconditional withdrawal from the Syrian Golan and all occupied Arab territories.

We demand the cessation of external interference in Syria and full respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity while supporting efforts to find a peaceful and negotiated solution to the situation imposed on that brotherly country.

We strongly condemn the implantation of the "Cesar Law" and other economic sanctions imposed by the United States and its allies, which hamper reconstruction in Syria, made all the worse amid the difficulties of the COVID-19 situation.

We reaffirm our support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran and our rejection of the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from that agreement.

We reiterate the call for an immediate and unconditional end to the imposition of arbitrary and illegal unilateral coercive measures against sovereign nations, which generate additional difficulties amid the ongoing efforts to battle the pandemic, and violate the human rights of their peoples, international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The Security Council must carry out its role in maintaining international peace and security, pursuant to the powers entrusted to it by the Charter of this Organization, without double standards.

Despite continuous violations of international law, including in the threat and use of force in international relations, aggression against sovereign States and interference in their internal affairs, we will continue advocating multilateralism, peace and full respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Annex 7**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Kenya on its successful presidency of the Security Council during the month of October 2021.

We reaffirm the validity of our statements delivered on 22 April, 16 May and 28 July in the open debates on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” (see, respectively, S/2021/404, S/2021/480 and S/PV.8826).

We reiterate our concern at the escalation of violence observed over recent months in the region, and on the parties to engage in bilateral and collective efforts aimed at agreeing on effective negotiations with a view to achieving just and lasting peace in the Middle East without delay.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), demolitions continue at an alarming rate. The properties subject to destruction include homes, animal shelters, latrines and solar panels essential to the livelihood, well-being and dignity of communities, something made much worse by the threat of the coronavirus disease pandemic.

According to OCHA, from January to July, 694 Palestinian structures were demolished, displacing 963 people. At the current rate, the demolitions and resultant displacement will exceed last year’s figures — 854 structures demolished and 1,001 people displaced. Ecuador expresses its concern at the humanitarian situation and the violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Refraining from causing any further harm to the civilian population is imperative, as is respect for people’s lives and safety, in accordance with obligations under international humanitarian law.

In our view, the hostility between the parties that has caused destruction and death is unacceptable, especially since the two nations have the obligation to comply with the norms of international law.

We likewise express our profound concern at the annexation measures, which constitute serious breaches of international law and seriously impact the prospects for a two-State solution and undermine the possibility of renewed negotiations. In that regard, the international community must reject any sort of illegal settlement policy, including the demolition or confiscation of Palestinian-owned structures, including water and sanitation structures and humanitarian aid, throughout the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) remains a serious problem in the Palestinian territory, taking into account that the pandemic has claimed more than 4,300 lives in Palestine since its onset. We call on the international community to strengthen the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility and other initiatives to promote and expand the national vaccination campaign in Gaza and the West Bank.

In our view, it is crucial that the international community step up efforts to get the parties to re-engage in meaningful negotiations with a view to reaching a just and lasting political solution for the parties based on the existence of two States, Palestine and Israel.

Ecuador once again urges all bodies of the United Nations and the international community to mobilize international support and assistance for the Palestinian people.

In conclusion, the Security Council must ensure the effective implementation of its resolutions 2532 (2020) and 2565 (2021) for a worldwide ceasefire and cessation of hostilities.

Annex 8**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October and to wish you success in leading the work of the Council. I also thank the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Tor Wennesland, for his briefing.

Egypt aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (annex 1), the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (annex 18).

A situation of high tension continues in the occupied Palestinian territory despite efforts to maintain the ceasefire reached after the recent escalation between Israel and Palestinian factions in the Gaza Strip. Israel continues to blockade the Gaza Strip, expand its settlement practices in the West Bank, confiscate land and demolish Palestinian homes and infrastructure. Arrests and settler violence against unarmed Palestinian civilians continue, as well as the ongoing Judaization in East Jerusalem and the attempt to expel Palestinian families from the Shaykh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods. Furthermore, all those developments are taking place in the context of the effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic on the Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

Against that backdrop, Egypt seeks to contain the situation by reaching out to all parties concerned, both Palestinian and Israeli, and at the regional and international levels, to establish a ceasefire and prevent further deterioration of the situation by assisting with the entry of individual humanitarian assistance through the Rafah crossing, fostering reconciliation between Palestinian factions and allocating \$500 million for reconstruction in the Gaza Strip through projects sponsored by Egyptian companies.

Egypt recognizes the importance of building trust between the Palestinian and Israeli sides and improving the situation on the ground, both in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. However, we must be honest with ourselves that such actions cannot be a substitute for a political settlement; rather, they pave the way towards it. Without a political settlement, we will be plunged into a vicious circle of violent reprisals between the two sides, which we must seek to avoid in order to safeguard the lives of innocent civilians and the capacities of the Palestinian people, which are destroyed every time.

Egypt therefore calls for the cessation of all unilateral actions and practices, particularly settlements, that inflame the situation in both the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, where the Israeli blockade must be lifted. Egypt also calls for the provision of the necessary support to the Palestinian Authority so that it can cope with the difficult domestic circumstances facing the Palestinian people. Egypt therefore looks forward to the international conference on support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in the coming month, to be convened under the auspices of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the State of Sweden, so that a lasting solution can be found to the Agency's financial crisis, thereby allowing it to completely fulfil its mandate.

With respect to the political process, Egypt stresses the importance of improvements on the ground to create a climate conducive to the resumption of negotiations, so that a political settlement can be reached and the Palestinian people can attain their legitimate rights through an independent State based on the 4 June

1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with internationally recognized resolutions, the two-State solution and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Egypt reiterates that the only way to achieve security and stability in the Middle East is through the Palestinian people's attainment of their legitimate rights and the liberation of all Arab territories occupied in 1967, including the occupied Syrian Golan, where the situation is no better, given the expansion of settlements.

At the regional level, Egypt welcomes the appointment of Hans Grundberg as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and looks forward to working with him and supporting his efforts to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Yemeni crisis through a political solution that guarantees the unity, sovereignty and independence of Yemen. Such a settlement should fulfil the aspirations of the Yemeni people and end their humanitarian suffering, in accordance with the basic terms of reference of the crisis, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015).

Egypt also supports United Nations efforts in Syria and Yemen to push forward the political process and bring about a comprehensive ceasefire within the parameters set forth in the relevant Security Council resolutions. Egypt stresses the need for the Security Council to play a more active role to achieve the political settlement of those crises, impose ceasefires and combat terrorism and illegal armed groups.

Egypt reiterates its deep concern about the continued launching of attacks by vessels on other vessels at sea and the attendant threat to international freedom of navigation. Egypt condemns, in the strongest terms, the attacks against Saudi Arabia and the escalating use of force outside internationally agreed frameworks by certain parties in the region, a course of action that violates international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and jeopardizes regional and international peace and security. Egypt also condemns the persistent interference by some States in the region in the internal affairs of other States and the fuelling of sectarian divisions that inflame conflicts.

Egypt continues to support all international and regional efforts to achieve security, stability and sustainable peace in Libya. In that regard, Egypt has been actively engaged in the work of the second Berlin Conference on Libya and the recent conference of countries neighbouring Libya in Algeria. We are scheduled to host the next session in Egypt. Egypt has also taken part in high-level events on Libya held on the margins of the high-level segment of the General Assembly. Egypt has supported the work of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission, which began drafting the ceasefire agreement in October 2020, from its efforts to open the coastal road and exchange prisoners up to its recent adoption of the integrated action plan for the withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries from Libya.

I take this opportunity to reaffirm Egypt's firm position on the need for the full implementation of resolution 2570 (2021), the conclusions of the second Berlin Conference, the resolutions of the African Union and the League of Arab States on the holding of presidential and legislative elections in Libya on 24 December 2021 and the immediate departure of all foreign forces and mercenaries. In that regard, Egypt follows with concern the repeated attempts to treat foreign forces and mercenaries separately and to suggest that the departure of foreign forces could be delayed to a stage following that of the mercenaries. That includes the omission of the issue of the departure of foreign forces from the agenda of the Libya Stability Initiative meeting scheduled for 21 October 2021. Egypt asserts that such a separation runs counter to Security Council resolutions and calls on all parties to comply fully with the relevant

international resolutions and not separate foreign forces from mercenaries. That is essential to achieving the desired peace and stability in Libya.

A just and comprehensive peace can be achieved in our region only if there is full compliance with internationally recognized resolutions and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, especially the principles of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and non-intervention in their internal affairs, and only if all occupied Arab territories are liberated, especially in Palestine and the Syrian Golan.

Annex 9**Statement by the Head of Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, Olof Skoog, in its capacity as observer**

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, and the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, align themselves with this statement.

The EU reaffirms its commitment to a just and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on the two-State solution, 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. To that end, meaningful re-engagement between the parties, confidence-building measures and improving the living conditions of ordinary people are urgently needed. The EU welcomes the recent high-level contacts between the parties, including those aimed at agreeing on measures to improve socioeconomic conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, and encourages them to continue. The EU stands ready to support such efforts with the aim of improving the situation on the ground and restoring confidence, and of opening a path towards the relaunch of the peace process as soon as possible. Restoring a political horizon towards a two-State solution, to which the EU reaffirms there is no alternative, remains of the utmost importance.

The EU continues to call for the consolidation of the ceasefire in Gaza and recalls its unequivocal position that rocket fire, the launching of incendiary balloons and other attacks by Hamas and other terrorist groups are unacceptable. The EU welcomes the steps that Israel has taken to ease some restrictions on Gaza and calls for the further lifting of restrictions to allow for early recovery and reconstruction efforts and basic service delivery as well as unimpeded humanitarian access to Gaza. The EU calls for all parties to take swift steps to produce a fundamental change in 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. The situation in the Gaza Strip has long been unsustainable; only a political solution will bring an end to the conflict.

The preservation of the viability of the two-State solution, with Jerusalem serving as the future capital of both States, is at the core of EU policy and will remain a priority. The EU urges both parties to demonstrate their stated commitment to a two-State solution through concrete actions and to refrain from unilateral actions that threaten it.

In that context, the EU is concerned about demolitions and evictions, including in East Jerusalem. Furthermore, the EU firmly condemns settler-related incidents. The EU reiterates that settlements are illegal under international law. The EU's opposition to Israel's settlement policy and actions taken in that context, including in East Jerusalem, is well known. Such actions 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, settler violence and restrictions of movement and access severely threaten the two-State solution and will only escalate an already tense environment. It will be important not to proceed with any planned evictions.

The EU recalls the special significance of the holy sites and calls for upholding the status quo put in place in 1967 for the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif in line with previous understandings and with respect to Jordan's special role. The EU will continue to closely monitor developments on the ground and their broader

implications and remains ready to take further action in order to protect the viability of the two-State solution.

The EU reiterates its call on the Palestinian Authority (PA) to organize the postponed national elections without further delay. The EU has consistently expressed its support for credible, inclusive and transparent elections for all Palestinians. We firmly believe that strong, inclusive, accountable and functioning democratic Palestinian institutions based on respect for the rule of law and human rights are vital for the Palestinian people, for democratic legitimacy and, ultimately, for the two-State solution. We strongly encourage all Palestinian actors to resume efforts to build on the successful talks between the factions over recent months, to adhere to previous agreements, to renounce violence and terrorism, to recognize Israel's right to exist and to commit to democratic principles, including the rule of law. We reiterate our call on Israel to facilitate the holding of such elections across all of the Palestinian territory, including in East Jerusalem. The EU continues to stand ready to work with all those involved to facilitate EU observation of the electoral process.

Palestinian civil-society organizations and actors must be allowed to carry out their important tasks free from obstruction, harassment and intimidation; the Palestinian Authority must also take responsibility in that respect. The EU expects a full, independent investigation into the death of Nizar Banat to be duly carried out and those responsible to be held accountable. The EU calls for the fundamental right to freedom of expression in areas under PA control to be upheld.

The European Union reiterates its deep and genuine appreciation for the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and for its dedicated staff, who are working in an extremely difficult and challenging context. UNRWA is playing a vital role in the humanitarian response and in early recovery and reconstruction in Gaza; it is an essential provider of vital services to millions of Palestine refugees and a stabilizing force in the region. Until a just, fair, agreed and realistic solution to the refugee issue in accordance with international law is found, UNRWA remains crucial for providing the necessary protection and essential services for Palestine refugees, and we will continue to support UNRWA in all its fields of operation, including in East Jerusalem.

The European Union recalls that together with its member States, it is the largest contributor to UNRWA. We welcome the additional financial support from other and new donors, including the renewed commitment from the United States, and calls upon all partners, including the Arab Gulf States, to increase their contributions to UNRWA. The upcoming conference hosted by Sweden and Jordan will be an important opportunity to take steps towards sufficient, predictable and sustainable funding of the Agency.

Allow me to turn now to the situation in Syria.

After more than a decade of conflict, the international community must not give up on Syria and must continue its efforts towards a political solution in line with resolution 2254 (2015).

Conflict, violence and instability in Syria continue to have profound repercussions on the stability of the entire region, causing enormous human suffering, with millions of Syrians still displaced or living as refugees in other countries, as was made clear once again in the recent devastating statistical update from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Syria continues to be an EU priority, as the EU declaration to mark the tenth year of the conflict, followed by the Brussels Conference on Syria in March this year, made clear.

The European Union remains committed to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian State and recalls that any sustainable solution to the conflict requires a genuine, inclusive 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, with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women. We recognize the important role played by the Women's Advisory Board in advising the Special Envoy.

The European Union fully supports the efforts, approach and determination of United Nations Special Envoy Geir Pedersen to advance on all aspects of resolution 2254 (2015) through a comprehensive approach, including on the issue of detainees who are in the hands of the regime and missing persons and the establishment of a safe and neutral environment in order for free and fair elections to be held under United Nations supervision, and continues to encourage the work of the Syrian-led Constitutional Committee, under United Nations auspices.

The European Union encourages progress during the sixth round of negotiations of the Constitutional Committee in Geneva, which started on 18 October, and calls on all participants, particularly on the Syrian regime, to engage in good faith with the aim of achieving swift and meaningful progress on constitutional reform.

The European Union has taken positive note of Special Envoy Pedersen's proposals for a new political format and for a "steps for steps" approach to move forward in the political process.

The European Union continues to call upon the Syrian regime and its allies, and indeed upon all parties to the conflict, to fully respect human rights and international humanitarian law, and in particular to permanently cease indiscriminate air strikes and the shelling of civilians and humanitarian workers. The recent siege and the attacks perpetrated by the Syrian regime on Dar'a are not acceptable.

In the north-west of Syria, the situation continues to be highly insecure. The ceasefire agreed in March 2020 is fragile and must be upheld and strengthened, civilians must be protected at all times, and attacks on civilian objects, including hospitals, must cease. The EU strongly condemns the recent attacks on Idlib. Signs that parties to the conflict are once again preparing to escalate the military confrontation are worrisome.

The European Union also continues to be concerned by the situation in the north-east of Syria. Military action by any party in Syria renders ordinary life dangerous and intolerable for the civilian population. The European Union once again echoes the call made on a number of occasions by the United Nations and the Security Council for the implementation of a nationwide ceasefire, in line with resolution 2254 (2015) and 2532 (2020).

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 the north-east of Syria should be addressed through political and diplomatic means — not military action — in full respect of international humanitarian law.

Within Syria, violations of international law, including violations and abuses of human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law by all parties, particularly the Syrian regime and its allies, persist.

The latest report (A/HRC/48/70) by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic has again shed troublesome light on the continued violations committed across the country. Among those most exposed to the ongoing violations are women, children, older persons, displaced persons and individuals who have returned to Syria, as well as persons with disabilities. The

conditions for the safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees and displaced persons, including internally displaced persons, have yet to be met in Syria. We share the Commission's conclusions in that regard. We also reiterate our strong concern about reports of social and demographic engineering in all areas throughout Syria.

The European Union continues to demand an end to repression, the release of detainees, information on the fate of the missing and meaningful engagement by the Syrian regime and its allies towards the full implementation of resolution 2254 (2015).

The EU continues to insist that the Syrian regime cooperate fully with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), including in its investigations on the use of chemical weapons in the conflict, and deplores the regime's continued lack of cooperation with the OPCW.

All those responsible for breaches of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, some of which may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, must be held accountable. The European Union reiterates its call to have the situation in Syria referred to the International Criminal Court.

The recent event organized by Liechtenstein on the margins of the General Assembly, co-sponsored by the United States, Germany, the Netherlands and Qatar, entitled "Raising the Bar: Working towards Comprehensive Justice for Syria", once again underlined the continued commitment of the wider United Nations membership to achieving justice for the most serious crimes committed in Syria during the past decade.

The EU remains convinced that accountability and justice for victims is essential for a stable, peaceful Syria, based on a credible, inclusive and viable political solution, in accordance with resolution 2254 (2015).

In the absence of avenues for international justice, the prosecution of war crimes under national jurisdiction, where possible, which is now under way in several European Union member States, represents an important contribution towards securing justice.

The European Union will continue to support efforts to gather evidence, including by the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for Syria and the work of the Commission of Inquiry, with a view to pursuing future legal action. We welcome the initiative of the Netherlands, together with Canada, to invoke Syria's responsibility for human rights violations that breach its international obligations, notably under the United Nations Convention against Torture.

The Syrian refugee crisis is the largest displacement crisis in the world, with 5.6 million registered refugees and another 6.7 million people displaced within Syria and with conditions not in place for their safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return, in line with the parameters defined by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and in accordance with international law. The European Union insists that the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their places of origin will be encouraged only when those conditions are met. The underlying causes of the refugee and displacement crisis must be addressed through the implementation of resolution 2254 (2015).

The European Union continues to warn against any further displacements in any part of Syria, as well as against the potential exploitation of such displacements for the purposes of social and demographic engineering.

Humanitarian needs in Syria have continued to increase: from 11 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2020 to 13.4 million people in need

in 2021. The EU and its member States are the largest donors in this humanitarian crisis, having provided €25 billion during the past 10 years. We will continue to show our solidarity.

The European Union welcomed the unanimous adoption of resolution 2585 (2021) on 9 July 2021, which provides considerable relief over the next 12 months for millions of Syrians who rely on the humanitarian assistance delivered through this mechanism for their survival. The renewal of the Security Council resolution on cross-border assistance will continue to be vital as long as there is no adequate alternative to meet the immense and growing humanitarian needs in north-west Syria. All parties must allow rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access, including across conflict lines, in order to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches people in need through the most direct routes.

The EU calls on all parties to the conflict, in particular the Syrian regime and its allies, to depoliticize the delivery of humanitarian aid, abide by their international humanitarian law and international human rights obligations and permanently cease indiscriminate air strikes and shelling.

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

We call on all parties to the conflict to advance a credible, sustainable and inclusive political solution based on the full and comprehensive implementation of resolution 2254 (2015), which is the only way to bring sustainable peace to Syria. The EU will continue to support the Office of the Special Envoy in its efforts to bring about an inclusive political solution.

Annex 10**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Mohammad Kurniadi Koba**

Indonesia aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Azerbaijan and Oman on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (annex 1) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (annex 18), respectively.

Indonesia remains concerned about the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, which continues to deteriorate. We deplore the continued violations by the occupying Power, including illegal occupation, settlement expansion, oppression, violence and forced displacement. The fact that such illegal actions continue unabated despite many United Nations resolutions is a reminder to this organ that it needs to act decisively to carry out its mandate by ensuring international peace and security. In that regard, allow me to reiterate three points.

First, we must continue to pursue a just, lasting solution. We must remain committed and united in our efforts to deter Israel's illegal actions, end the occupation in Palestine and hold Israel accountable for violating Palestinians' human rights. Indonesia reaffirms its unequivocal support of a just, comprehensive and inclusive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the two-State solution, based on United Nations resolutions and internationally agreed parameters, with East Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital.

Secondly, the Security Council must put an end to Israel's illegal actions and hold Israel to account. Israel's continued violations have exacerbated insecurity, led to the loss of lives and undermined the prospects for a just peace. This must stop. The international community, particularly the Security Council, must ensure protection for Palestinian people. Moreover, in order to address the current sense of impunity, it is crucial to hold Israel accountable for its many violations. We stress the importance of ensuring that Israel upholds its commitments and responsibilities under international law.

Thirdly, it is essential to provide humanitarian relief to Palestine. We are concerned that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which provides much-needed humanitarian relief to Palestinian refugees, continues to face funding shortfalls. The international community must recommit to ensuring sufficient, sustainable and predictable funding in order to enable the Agency to fulfil its mandate effectively. We also call on Israel to completely lift its blockade of Gaza, which has resulted in a humanitarian tragedy and the suffering of Palestinian people.

Lastly, Indonesia would like to reiterate that we remain committed to the people and the State of Palestine. We stand ready to support the Palestinian people and all efforts to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting solution.

Annex 11**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations, Majid Takht Ravanchi**

The current situation in the occupied Palestinian territory is worrisome and continues to be a matter of grave concern for the international community. The people of Palestine continue to suffer from the horrors of a brutal occupation that has lasted for over seven decades.

Israel, the occupying Power, has intensified its destructive, aggressive policies and practices against the Palestinian people, leading to civilian casualties, including children.

At the same time, the Israeli regime has continued the desecration of religious shrines and Islamic holy sites. A prime example of such aggression is the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which has been the target of repeated attacks, provocations and daily incursions by Israeli settlers, with the aim of speeding up the implementation of Israel's illegal plan — the temporal and physical division of this holy shrine.

Equally important, the humanitarian situation in Gaza Strip remains dire. The blockade has devastated Gaza's economy, caused widespread destruction and left most people largely cut off from the outside world. The continuation of the cruel blockade of Gaza is the collective punishment of innocent human beings. It constitutes a crime against humanity and poses a serious threat to international peace and security. It is an aggressive and savage act that breaches all international laws and norms.

The Israeli regime also continues its aggressive and destabilizing practices in the region by violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States of the region, including Syria, and threatening openly to use force against the sovereignty of the States Members of the United Nations.

It is deeply regrettable that the Security Council has thus far been unable to shoulder its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations to end the occupation of the Palestinian territory.

Failing to act against the violation of international law in the occupied Palestinian territory has emboldened the Israeli regime to continue its heinous crimes against the oppressed people of Palestine.

We call on the international community, particularly the Security Council, to take all the necessary measures to put an immediate end to Israel's occupation of Palestine, repeated attacks on the Palestinian people and cruel blockade of Gaza, where people are suffering under inhuman, tragic living conditions.

The Israeli regime must be held to account for its violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territory. Such crimes must not go unpunished. The settlement of the Palestinian crisis can be achieved only if the inalienable rights of the people of occupied Palestine are fully recognized, restored and preserved.

The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the only possible solution for the realization of the fundamental rights of Palestinian people, particularly their right to self-determination, is to hold a national referendum consistent with historical realities and the principles of international law, with the participation of all Palestinian people, including Muslims, Christians and Jews and their descendants. Such a referendum would constitute a solid basis for the settlement of the question of Palestine, the restoration of its sovereignty and an end to the occupation.

Finally, we totally reject and strongly condemn the unfounded accusations and fabrications made against my country at this meeting by the representative of the Israeli regime (see S/PV.8883), which regularly makes baseless claims against Iran. Again today, the representative of the Israeli regime attempted to play victim and distract the attention of the international community from the atrocities it has committed against the Palestinian people in the occupied territory.

Israel's accusations regarding Iran's peaceful nuclear programme, whose peaceful nature has been verified on numerous occasions by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), are completely absurd, irrelevant and baseless. It is obvious that the Israeli regime's objective is to cover up the danger that its nuclear weapons pose to the region and beyond. To remove that threat, the international community must compel this regime to renounce nuclear weapons, join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and put all its nuclear activities and facilities under the comprehensive safeguards of the IAEA.

The representative of this terrorist regime has misused this forum, whose primary responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security, and explicitly threatened to use of force against a Member State of the United Nations. That illegal threat constitutes a gross violation of international law and the United Nations Charter, particularly its Article 2, paragraph 4, and must therefore be denounced and condemned by the Security Council.

The Islamic Republic of Iran reserves its inherent right under international law to take all the necessary measures to protect and defend itself.

Annex 12**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, Ishikane Kimihiro**

First and foremost, I would like to reaffirm Japan's commitment to supporting a two-State solution based on all relevant Security Council resolutions and internationally agreed parameters.

Japan's Foreign Minister Motegi visited Palestine and Israel in August to demonstrate our unwavering commitment to this issue, even under the ongoing coronavirus disease crisis. In meetings with his counterparts, he urged both sides to take concrete measures to ease tensions and restore trust, while stressing the importance of improving the situation through peaceful means.

Tensions in Gaza have decreased since the ceasefire was declared. Humanitarian and reconstruction efforts are ongoing, with logistical and financial support from neighbouring countries and donors. Although humanitarian needs in Gaza remain unmet, Japan appreciates the fact that the ceasefire has been sustained and that there have been positive developments, such as the smoother delivery of humanitarian goods and movement of people. Efforts by Egypt and others to facilitate talks between Palestine and Israel and among parties in Palestine, as well as recent high-level contacts between Israeli and Palestinian officials, are all encouraging.

On the other hand, the situation on the ground remains worrisome. Settlement activities, the destruction of homes and Palestinians expulsions by Israeli authorities in the West Bank, as well as acts of violence at demonstrations, continue. Such acts jeopardize efforts to build trust among the parties and could lead to re-escalation. Japan calls upon all parties to halt all activities that could hinder progress towards the realization of a two-State solution and reiterates that such a solution cannot be achieved through violence, but only through negotiations and mutual trust.

Japan is committed to continuing to support the people of Palestine so long as humanitarian and socioeconomic challenges remain in Palestine, particularly in Gaza. Japan has extended grant aid totalling \$23 million to Palestine since June, as well as \$40.9 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) this year. Japan thanks the United States for its full re-engagement with, and support for, Palestine, including its hefty financial contribution to UNRWA. Japan takes this opportunity to reiterate its support for UNRWA's work on the ground, including its generations-long efforts in the education sector. Japan encourages the international community, particularly the countries of the region, to provide funding for the Agency.

Furthermore, Japan has been taking the lead in two important initiatives — the Corridor for Peace and Prosperity and the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development — with the aim of supporting political dialogue among the parties concerned, Palestinian State-building efforts and confidence-building between the two sides.

Let me conclude by expressing Japan's determination to spare no effort to achieve a two-State solution.

Annex 13**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Jordan to the United Nations**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We appreciate your important role in enabling the Council to carry out its mandate of maintaining international peace and security.

The peace process today faces two options: either a just peace leading to an end to the occupation and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with the 4 June 1967 borders and East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the two-State solution, or an intensification of the conflict through continued violations of the rights of the Palestinian people and illegal actions that undermine any opportunity for peace.

The Jordanian-Egyptian-Palestinian trilateral summit, which brought together His Majesty King Abdullah II, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Thursday, 2 September 2021 in Cairo, reiterated the rejection of illegal Israeli measures that undermine the two-State solution and threaten the chances for peace in the region, including settlement construction and expansion in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, land confiscation, house demolitions and the displacement of Palestinians from their homes. In that last connection, the summit stressed the need to respect the right of the people of Shaykh Jarrah to their homes.

The continued Israeli violations against the Al-Aqsa Mosque/Haram Al-Sharif are a threat to international peace and security, as was clearly demonstrated this past April and May, when Israeli violations led to a cycle of violence and destruction and the Israeli war on Gaza. Jordan believes that the practices of the occupying forces, the incursions of settlers and extremists into the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque/Haram Al-Sharif, the obstruction of the work of the Jordanian Jerusalem Waqf and Al-Aqsa Mosque Affairs Administration at Haram Al-Sharif and attempts to impose a new status quo are violations of Israel's obligations as an occupying Power under international humanitarian law. The Security Council must carry out its responsibilities to stop those violations and compel Israel to respect the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 478 (1980).

We stress that the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque/Haram Al-Sharif, with a total area of 144,000 square metres, including courtyards, is a place of worship purely for Muslims and that the Jordanian Jerusalem Waqf and Al-Aqsa Mosque Affairs Administration is the legal body with exclusive jurisdiction to manage all the affairs at Haram Al-Sharif and control the entry into and exit from it.

We affirm that the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, based on the historical Hashemite guardianship of the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem exercised by His Majesty King Abdullah II, will continue its role and efforts to protect and care for the holy sites and preserve their legal and historical status.

We note the importance of continuing efforts to stabilize and build upon the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip in order to achieve comprehensive and sustainable de-escalation, as well as the importance of reconstruction efforts in the Gaza Strip and the provision of development support to other Palestinian territories. We call on the international community to make efforts to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip by participating in reconstruction efforts and by pressuring Israel to end its illegal blockade and respond to the basic needs and humanitarian needs of the people of the Gaza Strip, in line with its responsibilities under international law as an occupying Power in the Gaza Strip.

Jordan and Sweden are preparing to hold an international conference on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) next month and are continuing their efforts to mobilize political support and translate it into sustainable and predictable financial support so that UNRWA can implement the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

UNRWA must continue to provide the vital services it is mandated by the Organization to provide pending a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine refugees that would uphold their right of return and compensation in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and in the context of a comprehensive solution that would end the occupation and lead to the establishment of an independent and viable Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital along the 4 June 1967 borders, in the context of a two-State solution and in accordance with international law.

The achievement of peace is our main concern in the region because we are aware, as others should be, that instability, wherever it occurs, is a threat to security everywhere.

Annex 14**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Kuwait to the United Nations**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the Permanent Mission of Kenya on successfully presiding over the work of the Security Council during the month of October and to wish you success for the month's remaining meetings. I also thank the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Tor Wennesland, for his valuable briefing to the Council (see S/PV.8883). I reiterate our support for him and for all efforts to de-escalate the situation and restore stability in the region.

The Security Council is today holding its quarterly open debate under the agenda item "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question" as the wider world — and the Middle East in particular — continues to face serious challenges. The coronavirus disease pandemic is at the forefront of those challenges and has claimed more than 4.7 million lives, exacerbated food insecurity and caused severe economic contraction and stagnation. Regrettably, Israel, the occupying Power, exploits the fact that the international community is focused on that decisive struggle and persists in its relentless policy of aggression against the Palestinian people, reminding us once again that it has not backed down from plans to annex more Palestinian territories in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Such policies and practices serve to illustrate yet again that Israel, the occupying Power, seeks to entrench the occupation by extending its illegal activities and policies through the expansion, construction and establishment of thousands of settlement units and the annexation of land, in flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2334 (2016). Several reports have confirmed the continued deterioration of the situation in the Palestinian territories as a result of, among other things, the increase in settlement activities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem — where Israel, the occupying Power, announced several days ago its decision to resume plans to build 10,000 illegal housing units for settlers in an area north of occupied Jerusalem, in addition to demolishing Palestinian homes in the Silwan neighbourhood.

We are also further concerned by the continuing violence perpetrated by Israeli settlers and security forces against the defenceless Palestinian people. Israeli security forces in the occupied West Bank have shot dead at least 60 Palestinians, while more than 260 Palestinians, including 66 children and 41 women, have been killed in Gaza so far this year. Those acts constitute yet more war crimes to add to the litany of atrocities perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian people and to its blatant violations of human rights, the Charter of the United Nations, United Nations resolutions and international law. Israel, the occupying Power, aims with its policies to destroy any prospect or hope for the Palestinians to establish an independent, contiguous, viable, lasting and sovereign Palestinian State.

Such practices require us, more than ever before, to leverage international political and legal mechanisms to hold Israel accountable for its ongoing violations of the rights of the Palestinian people — rights that are guaranteed under international law — so as to put an end to the arbitrary arrest campaigns, the demolition of Palestinian buildings and destruction and seizure of Palestinian property, the forced displacement of civilians and the deaths of Palestinian civilians at the hands of settlers, not to mention the blockade imposed on Gaza and the repeated attacks on Islamic and Christian holy sites.

Israel and the entire world are aware that the Palestinian issue has been, and continues to be, central to the Arab and Islamic world. Tension and instability will continue to prevail in our region unless the Palestinian people attain all their legitimate political rights and Israel, the occupying Power, ceases its practices and violations of international humanitarian law, namely, the building of settlements, the confiscation of land, the continued blockade of Gaza and the desecration of holy sites.

We stress the importance of continuing efforts to relaunch negotiations within a specific timetable aimed at a just and comprehensive peace in accordance with the terms of reference of the peace process, internationally recognized resolutions and the Arab peace Initiative to end the Israeli occupation. We also stress the importance of the establishment of an independent Palestinian State along the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, as well as the return of refugees.

At the same time, we emphasize the historical role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in providing basic assistance to millions of Palestinian refugees and the importance of continuing support for its work. Based on its firm position of support for the Palestinian cause, Kuwait, through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, donated \$21.5 million to ensure the continuation of the vital educational, health and social services provided by UNRWA to the Palestinian refugee community in its various areas of operations.

Annex 15**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, Amal Mudallali**

Allow me to thank the President for his active and effective presidency this month and for giving prominence to issues that deserve the attention of the Security Council and the whole United Nations system.

The situation in the Middle East continues to grip the Council and the whole world because of the protracted conflicts, the enduring occupation and the humanitarian crises that were borne of these unfortunate conditions. The path to peace is still blocked in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, with no movement on the horizon that might bring hope for peace to millions of Palestinians under occupation. The situation on the ground is getting worse, making the goal of a two-State solution harder to implement with every passing day.

Israeli settlement activities are accelerating and uprooting the Palestinians from their land to build new settlements or expand existing ones. This is the torturous daily reality for Palestinians. Only last week the Israeli authorities approved a new building plan in an illegal Jerusalem settlement. In fact, three new building plans for new or existing settlements in and around Jerusalem have been designed to split Palestinian villages off from Jerusalem and sever all their physical ties to the holy city, while linking the Israeli settlements in the West Bank to Jerusalem. This policy will render any hopes for a Palestinian State impossible, as long as every day passes without a peaceful settlement. Only a comprehensive and just settlement based on resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 2334 (2016), inter alia, can be a basis for a political settlement that gives the Palestinians their due political rights and self-determination.

The absence of such a settlement will prolong the daily Palestinian suffering stemming from the Israeli occupation, in particular the land confiscation, house demolitions, acts of violence against Palestinians and the imprisonment of millions in Gaza. This is in addition to the violence and harassment that the Palestinians endure from the settlers. During olive-harvesting season, Palestinian villagers endure attacks by settlers who uproot trees, destroy their crops and physically assault them. The absence of a peace horizon or hope for an end of the occupation will prolong any prospects for peace for the Palestinian people and the region as a whole.

Lebanon welcomes the determination by the United States Administration to move forward with opening a consulate in Jerusalem and deepen American ties with the Palestinians in the context of working toward a two-State solution, as Secretary of State Anthony Blinken affirmed last week. This will give the Palestinians hope for a better future in their own independent State.

The Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Philippe Lazzarini, recently warned that the Agency is at risk of collapse if funding is not guaranteed in the upcoming weeks. It currently lacks funds to operate in the coming months of November and December. UNRWA's vital role to millions of Palestinian refugees, particularly those in Lebanon, is unquestionable. We have always stressed the importance of ensuring predictable financing for the Agency by providing sustained and multi-year contributions. In this regard, the preparations for holding an international conference co-chaired by Jordan and Sweden in November 2021 in support of UNRWA are a critical step. This year's return of the United States as a UNRWA partner and donor is also a positive step forward.

Lebanon has a new Government and is trying to put the political, financial and economic processes of recovery on track after more than a year of political gridlock and a debilitating financial crisis. A team from the International Monetary Fund is in Beirut holding talks with the Lebanese authorities on how to move forward on fixing Lebanon's finances with the help of the international community. Discussions are also under way on how to resolve the outstanding problems in relation to energy, electricity and supplies. The approval last month of a road map involving Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan and Syria to supply natural gas to my country is a positive development that will help ease the power shortages that have heavily affected peoples' lives in Lebanon.

There is determination to move Lebanon out of its unprecedented crisis and get it back on a sustainable recovery path. It will not be easy, but with the help of the international community and friends, Lebanon can regain its political and financial health and once again become a magnet in the region.

There was an unfortunate event last week in Beirut involving a shooting at a demonstration that killed five demonstrators and injured others. The country is trying to contain the ramifications of this incident and move towards unity and reconciliation. The consensus in Lebanon is that there should never be a return to communal infighting and that all political differences should be resolved through dialogue. We hope that people's legitimate political demands will be met through implementing much-needed reforms and through a democratic and transparent process that leads to the preservation of Lebanon's independence and sovereignty. There is also agreement that differences over judicial issues should be resolved through a process sanctioned by the Constitution, which guarantees the independence of the judiciary, as Prime Minister Najib Azmi Mikati affirmed this week. This has paved the way for the judiciary to find a solution to a contentious judicial issue related to the port explosion.

The Lebanese people have learned from years of wars that dialogue is the shortest and most effective way to solve problems and live together in peace and security. They will continue to do so despite the current difficulties.

Lebanon welcomes the unanimous adoption, on 30 August, of resolution 2591 (2021), which extended for one year, without changes, the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Lebanon thanks all Security Council members for their invaluable unanimous support of this resolution, which is providing assistance to the Lebanese army.

We cannot stress enough the stabilizing role of UNIFIL in the south of Lebanon and the region. We reiterate our support for UNIFIL's leadership and staff and for the thousands of women and men peacekeepers from over 40 countries working in the mission. We are grateful to all the troop-contributing countries. We extend our sincere condolences to the Government and the people of Ghana, but most importantly to the family of Sergeant Sekyere Mansfield, who died while doing his honourable duty in the service of peace in UNIFIL this week.

Cooperation between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces remains strong and robust. Lebanon remains committed to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) in its entirety and continues to condemn the daily Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty by air and ground.

Annex 16**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, Syed Mohamad Hasrin Aidid**

I thank the President for convening today's open debate. Malaysia aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Oman on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (annex 18) and the representative of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (annex 1). Allow me to highlight several points in my national capacity.

We have heard time and again the expression of support by the international community for a two-State solution. Yet it is regrettable that Palestinian statehood is being denied, including its right to hold full membership status in the United Nations.

We must remind ourselves that despite the absence of a large-scale war, the Palestinians continue to live under brutal occupation and within a repressive blockade. Their fundamental rights are denied while illegal settlements are being expanded.

Israeli settlements are illegal under international law. Israel's systematic oppression of Palestinians and its discriminatory policies are also tantamount to crimes of apartheid. One cannot advocate human rights and condemn other injustices while at the same time ignoring Israeli atrocities towards the Palestinians. The Security Council must not turn a blind eye to this. It is high time for accountability.

Malaysia reiterates its call for the Security Council to revisit the recommendation contained in the Secretary-General's 2018 report, A/ES-10/794, on the deployment of United Nations-mandated armed forces or unarmed observers to improve the protection of Palestinians.

President Abbas's call for Israel to end its occupation within a year in the recent general debate (see A/76/PV.12 and A/76/332/Add.7, annex III) must be taken seriously. It is more urgent than ever for the Security Council, and especially the Middle East Quartet, to create the necessary conditions for peace talks between the relevant parties and restart them. We must not rely on the status quo as there is no guarantee that a surge of bloodshed will not happen again.

Malaysia will not waiver in its commitment to and support for the Palestinian people in realizing their inalienable rights to self-determination and independence. Our position is clear — only a negotiated political settlement achieving a two-State solution can create sustainable peace, based on internationally agreed parameters, international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

While advocating an urgent political and peaceful solution to the conflict, Malaysia also calls on the international community to support humanitarian efforts to ease the conditions of the Palestinian people, including through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). On 14 October 2021, Malaysia pledged \$1 million as a long-term contribution to UNRWA, in support of predictable and sustainable funding for the Agency. In addition, we also announced an additional bilateral contribution amounting to 5 million Malaysian ringgits for rebuilding a clinic in Gaza.

Annex 17**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations**

At the outset, I would like to thank Kenya for its successful presidency of the Security Council this month.

On this occasion, the Kingdom of Morocco reiterates its position with regard to the Palestinian question, based on the two-State solution, through the creation of a Palestinian State within the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, as well as its attachment to negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli parties as the only way to achieve a final, lasting and comprehensive settlement to this conflict.

In His capacity as Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, His Majesty King Mohammed VI pays great attention to the Palestinian issue and continues to firmly insist on the need to preserve the special status of the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and respect the freedom to practice religious rites for followers of the three monotheistic religions, as well as the Muslim aspect of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the Al-Aqsa mosque.

I wish to recall the Al-Quds Call, signed by His Majesty King Mohammed VI and His Holiness Pope Francis, during His Holiness's visit to Morocco in March 2019, aimed at promoting and enhancing the specific multi-faith character of the holy city, its spiritual dimension and its particular identity.

Morocco reiterates its support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and its mandate. UNRWA plays a vital role in supporting education, health, and social services for 5.7 million of Palestinian refugees and continues to do so, especially in the challenging circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic.

For its part, the Bayt Mal Al-Quds Al-Sharif Agency, the executive field arm of the Al-Quds Committee continues to support development plans and projects in Palestine and the holy city in order to promote the economic empowerment of the Palestinian people. In August 2021, the Gaza Strip inaugurated the Al-Quds specialty hospital, which has mainly been financed by the Kingdom of Morocco. It has a capacity of 102 beds and several specialty wings, including a 10-bed intensive care unit and an obstetrics and gynecology section.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate that the Kingdom of Morocco places the Palestinian cause at the top of its priorities and remains faithful in its attachment to the achievement of the two-State solution, with Palestine and Israel, living side by side in peace and security.

Annex 18**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Oman to the United Nations**

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of States members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), in my capacity as Vice-Chair of OIC group.

This meeting is being held while the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory is dramatically deteriorating. In fact, Israel, the occupying Power, has been escalating its violations against the Palestinian people, leading to civilian casualties, including among children, and violations against religious shrines and Islamic sanctities, at the forefront of which is Al-Aqsa mosque, which has continuously been the target of attacks, provocations and daily incursions by Israeli settlers, in an attempt to speed up the implementation of Israel's illegal plan of temporal and spatial division of this holy shrine.

Moreover, we witnessed with shock the recent Israeli desecration of Islamic cemeteries, including the Ma'man Allah/Mamilla and Al-Yusufiya cemeteries, in Jerusalem, the opening of the so-called Museum of Tolerance in parts of the Ma'man Allah/Mamilla cemetery and the exhumation of Muslim graves that are more than 1,000 years old. Such heinous practices against sacred places wound the feelings of hundreds of millions of Muslims across the globe. Such actions could also have far-reaching and devastating consequences that would further complicate the horizon and transform Jerusalem into a capital of hatred, fanaticism and violence instead of the beacon of tolerance, peace and harmonious coexistence that it must be.

In that regard, we reaffirm the responsibility of the international community to end such Israeli illegal actions, provide protection for Jerusalem, its citizens and holy sites and preserve its historical and legal status. There are many relevant United Nations resolutions to that effect, including those adopted by the Security Council, and they must be upheld and implemented.

The OIC has repeatedly drawn the international community's attention to the acceleration of Israel's illegal policies of settlement construction, as well as the seizure and demolition of Palestinian homes and structures. Among others, the recent Israeli illegal plan to build 10,000 settlement units at the site of the Qalandia airport, north of occupied East Jerusalem, is another illegal act that constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions and could undermine the territorial integrity, viability and contiguity of the Palestinian State and, consequently, the possibility of the two-State solution on the pre-1967 borders.

In that regard, it is necessary to recall resolution 2334 (2016), by which the Council, inter alia, unequivocally reiterates, in paragraph 2,

“its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and that it fully respect all of its legal obligations in this regard”.

We call on this international body to ensure the full compliance of Israel, the occupying Power, with its legal obligations under international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

While recognizing with appreciation the bold efforts being made by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to meet the basic needs of the 5.8 million Palestine refugees registered with the Agency, we express our deep concern about the recurring financial shortfalls that inevitably affect UNRWA services and risk an interruption of services, which would have serious consequences for the refugee community, the host countries and the

entire region. We are confident that solidarity and joint action to mobilize resources will contribute to reducing the difficulties that the Agency is encountering, ensure that it is able to uphold its mandate and help mitigate the hardships of the Palestine refugees.

The absence of any serious political and legal action by this body to enforce its standing resolutions that aim to end the decades-long Israeli occupation is neither acceptable nor sustainable, and it contradicts the Council's duties under the Charter of the United Nations. Such a passive attitude would no doubt further prolong the historic injustice, deepen the political impasse in the peace process, exacerbate the humanitarian suffering of the Palestinian people and contribute to destabilizing an already-fragile region.

In that regard, the OIC urges this international body to help restore hope and confidence in peace in the region. The OIC also renews its invitation to all parties to align their policies, stances and efforts with their obligations under international law. Similarly, it expresses the hope that the international community will engage in meaningful efforts towards reviving the peace process, with a view to achieving a just and comprehensive solution based on the internationally agreed parameters, including the relevant United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the OIC's support for, and solidarity with, the Palestinian people in their struggle to achieve their inalienable national rights, including the right to return, self-determination and their independent State on the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

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

Pakistan welcomes the convening of this open debate of the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

The nineteenth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) , covering the period from 12 June to 27 September, reveals that violence between Israel and the Palestinians has continued and often escalated. Twenty-seven Palestinians were killed, including two women and five children, and 4,814 were injured, including 10 women and 530 children. The demolitions and seizure of Palestinian properties have also continued in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

Those actions are a disturbing codicil to the Israeli aggression against the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque last May, which inflamed tensions and triggered the most serious outbreak of hostilities between Palestinians and Israel in several years. The security environment created by Israel's persistent acts of aggression is extremely volatile. It could lead to another escalation of hostilities at any time.

Many States and entities appear to have lost hope for a just and peaceful settlement of the conflict. Yet it is vital not to lose sight of the legal, political and moral dimensions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

First, I believe there is no question in anyone's mind that Israel's actions in the occupied Palestinian lands are all grave violations of the relevant Security Council resolutions and international law, including international humanitarian law, exemplified by the seizure of land and properties for Israeli settlements, the violence against unarmed Palestinian children, women and men, the blockade of Gaza and the desecration of the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Secondly, there is no moral, legal or political equivalence between Israel, the occupying State, and the occupied and oppressed Palestinian people. The Palestinian struggle for self-determination and the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions is legitimate; the Israeli repression of the occupied Palestinian people is illegitimate. Neither can any equivalence be drawn between Israel's military and occupation forces — which number among the most powerful in the world — and Palestinians armed with little more than stones and defiant courage.

Thirdly, the perpetuation of Israeli occupation will not bring peace to the Holy Land. As history has shown, although the Palestinians are dispossessed and disempowered by Israel and its patrons, every succeeding generation of Palestinians will persist in seeking its freedoms and fundamental rights, including their right to self-determination. Israel cannot rule indefinitely over a defiant Palestinian majority. The peoples of the Arab and Muslim world and other civilized nations will not tolerate such outcomes.

Fourthly, the two-State solution, involving the establishment of a sovereign, contiguous and viable Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel within recognized and accepted boundaries, offers the only solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The alternative to a two-State solution is an Israeli apartheid State or, even worse, the genocide of the Palestinian people. Even a world as morally compromised as ours will not tolerate either outcome. The peoples of the Arab and Muslim world and other civilized nations will not contemplate such outcomes. Neither, I believe, will the people of Israel, with their enduring memories of the Holocaust.

The entire Middle East and adjacent regions will not see durable peace and stability while the occupation and oppression of the Palestinian people — and the similar occupation and aggression of the people of Jammu and Kashmir — continue. The oppression of the Palestinians, the Kashmiris and other Muslim populations are a major underlying cause of the rise of extremism and terrorism in recent decades. Just solutions to such oppression and injustice are essential to defeat and eliminate the terrorism that has spread across and beyond the Middle East.

It is Pakistan's sincere hope that Israel and the Palestinians will embrace the two-State solution, even as some cynics predict that it is already out of reach.

Annex 20**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations, Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani**

[Original: Arabic]

We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. I also thank the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Tor Wennesland, for his briefing and his tireless efforts, as well as the other briefers (see S/PV.8883).

Qatar participates in this quarterly open debate based on its belief in the importance of the Security Council's mandated responsibility to address the challenges to peace and security in the Middle East. Despite decades-long consideration of the Middle East issue, the question remains on the Council's agenda.

Recent Israeli violations in East Jerusalem, which have included repeated attacks by the authorities of the occupying Power and settlers on Islamic and Christian holy sites, in particular at Haram Al-Sharif, and attempts to seize and demolish Palestinian property, displace Palestinians and illegally annex their land, are part of a policy of Judaization and illegal settlement and constitute violations of United Nations resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016). The military escalation in the Gaza Strip, which has taken hundreds of lives, including those of innocent children, and exacerbated the deteriorating humanitarian situation of the 2 million civilians in the besieged Gaza Strip, runs counter to international humanitarian law.

The State of Qatar emphasizes that an ultimate resolution of this situation will be achieved only in accordance with international law, internationally recognized resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. A solution also requires an end to occupation in all Arab territories and settlement activities in the occupied territories, a resolution of the refugee problem and the exercise by the Palestinians of their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State along the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the vision of a two-State solution, which the international community has agreed is the only way out of the conflict. For the time being, the ceasefire must be maintained, and the humanitarian and economic situation of the Palestinian people must be addressed so that they can overcome their challenges.

The State of Qatar has sought a restoration of security and stability through diplomatic initiatives in coordination with the United Nations and friendly countries. Recognizing the essential need to maintain stability and address the urgent humanitarian and economic situation, Qatar has begun to increase the humanitarian relief and development aid it has consistently provided to the Palestinian people, with His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, sending a \$500 million grant for reconstruction in the Gaza Strip. Last September, the United Nations launched a cash assistance programme to help approximately 100,000 needy families in the Gaza Strip in the form of a \$40 million grant from Qatar to be distributed over four months. The State of Qatar will also continue to support the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and commends its great efforts, which will be indispensable as long as refugees remain an issue.

After 10 years of crisis in Syria, Qatar continues to stress that ending it requires a political solution in accordance with the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex), the full implementation of resolution 2254 (2015) and accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the use of chemical weapons. In the meantime, Qatar continues to provide humanitarian assistance to alleviate the

suffering of the Syrian people. At this year's Brussels Conference, Qatar announced a new \$100 million pledge to support the future of Syria and the region.

With respect to Libya, Qatar emphasizes the need to consolidate security, political and economic progress and to proceed with a Libyan-led political process supported by the United Nations in order to achieve a sustainable settlement for the benefit of the Libyan people. The interim Government of National Unity should also be assisted in carrying out its duties of unifying State institutions, holding free, fair and comprehensive elections by the deadline and providing basic services and economic and social development for the Libyan people.

With respect to Yemen, the State of Qatar affirms its firm position in support of that country's unity and territorial integrity. It also affirms that the only way out of the crisis is through negotiations between the Yemeni parties on the basis of the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015).

In conclusion, Mr. President, the State of Qatar will continue to pursue, with a positive, constructive and sincere approach, the targets advocated by the international community in order to end the crises and meet the challenges to stability, peace and security in the Middle East and around the world.

Annex 21**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, Cho Hyun**

At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Tor Wennesland, for his briefing. My Government reaffirms its full support for his tireless efforts and dedication to bring about peace in the region.

The Republic of Korea expresses its deep concern about the Special Coordinator's recent presentation of the report the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2334 (2016) (see PV.8869) on the continuing violence and hostilities happening on a daily basis. It is appalling that women, youth and even children have been victims of frequent violence. A Palestinian boy was killed because he was throwing a stone. A 1-year-old Israeli child was injured near Jerusalem's Old City. This must stop. We call for an immediate end to violence and incitement and reiterate our appeals for all parties concerned to refrain from provocative acts.

My Government emphasizes the importance of respecting resolution 2334 (2016), international law and related bilateral agreements. Together with the international community, we strongly believe that dialogue and negotiation are key to advancing a viable two-State solution. Violence, especially against civilians, can never be a means to achieve peace. We express our support for efforts to resume peace talks, including those of the Middle East Quartet in that regard.

Accordingly, the Republic of Korea welcomes continuing engagement between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian leadership. My delegation takes note that no new settlement housing plans were advanced or approved during the Special Coordinator's latest reporting period.

My delegation looks forward to the expansion of further confidence-building measures, which will eventually create a more favourable environment for dialogue and cooperation. The engagement of women, youth and civil society in the confidence-building process is also crucial moving forward.

At the same time, intra-Palestinian reconciliation must be reinvigorated. We reiterate that unity and consensus among the Palestinian people are vital to achieving peace and an independent, sovereign and democratic State.

My delegation remains deeply concerned about the urgent humanitarian needs in Gaza and the West Bank. In order to help address that challenge, the Republic of Korea has so far provided \$1.7 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the emergency pooled fund for the occupied Palestinian territory of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). My delegation reaffirms its strong support for efforts made by UNRWA and OCHA to improve the humanitarian situation in Palestine, and we call on all parties to ensure full unimpeded humanitarian access and to respect international law, including international humanitarian law.

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the fact that parliamentary elections, which represent a meaningful step towards further stability and development, were conducted in Iraq without major security incidents. My Government hopes that the elections will lead to the swift formation of a Government to meet the Iraqi people's legitimate needs for a better future.

The Republic of Korea reaffirms its commitment to continue its constructive role in advancing peace and stability in the region in cooperation with the United Nations and the international community.

Annex 22**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations, Abdallah Al-Mouallimi**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month.

The foreign policy of Saudi Arabia is supported by a great legacy of principles, namely, respect for the sovereignty of States, good-neighbourliness and the resolution of issues and disputes through dialogue and peaceful means, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international norms and laws. My country has consistently emphasized those principles and was among the first States to take such a practical approach in dealing with issues and conflicts in order to reach the goal for which the United Nations was established, that is, the maintenance of international peace and security.

By contrast, occupying Powers and expansionist States in the region are interested only in achieving their interests, regardless of the threat that poses to the security and stability of the region and the destruction of the futures of many peoples of the region.

The Palestinian issue is the biggest challenge facing the region with respect to achieving stability, security, prosperity and development. My country reiterates its consistent approach and firm position towards the Palestinian issue and its solidarity with the Palestinian people in their quest for a just and comprehensive solution to their cause in accordance with internationally recognized resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States in 2002, which calls for the complete withdrawal of Israel from all Arab territories occupied since 1967 and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reiterates its call on the international community and the Security Council to stand firm against these Israeli policies and to move the peace process forward to reach an agreement that restores the Palestinian people's legitimate rights. A just and comprehensive peace is the strategic choice, not policies of fait accompli and brute force.

My Government condemns the brutal terrorist attacks by Iranian-backed Houthi militias on civilians and civilian sites in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including the attacks on Abha and Jazan airports, which resulted in civilian casualties of various nationalities. That was a continuation of the approach taken by those militias against civilians since the beginning of the conflict. More recent examples include the siege and starvation since last September of more than 37,000 civilians in the district of Abdiyah, Ma'rib governorate, most of them women, children and older persons. The sole hospital was targeted with ballistic missiles. The district has been constantly bombed with heavy weapons and drones. The injured have not been allowed to leave for treatment. In a particularly heinous crime against humanity, medical supplies and food aid have been prevented from entering by closing the only road leading to the district, which suffers from shortages and deficits of all kinds of basic daily needs due to the blockade.

Saudi Arabia expresses its sorrow and anger that, even as this meeting is being held today, the Security Council has stood by helplessly, unable to issue a statement condemning those attacks and practices, which calls into question the effectiveness of the Council and its ability to fulfil its role.

My country calls on the Council to take the necessary and decisive steps to prevent the Houthis from endangering civilian lives. We reiterate our full right to take all the measures necessary to protect the security and stability of the territory, citizens and residents of Saudi Arabia from any terrorist attacks, in accordance with its obligations under international law. The Iranian-backed Houthi militia bears the responsibility for the repercussions of the Yemeni crisis and the worsening of the humanitarian situation. Those militias continue to prioritize narrow political interests over the interests of the Yemeni people and the security and stability of the region.

My Government supports the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen to reach a full ceasefire and begin a comprehensive political process to reach a solution based on the three terms of reference: the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementing Mechanism, the outcomes of the Yemeni National Dialogue Conference and resolution 2216 (2015).

Among all the challenges in the Arab region, the Iranian regime's hostile behaviour represents a serious and major threat to the security and stability of the region and to the future and prosperity of its peoples as a result of the ideologies of hegemony and exclusion espoused by the Iranian authorities.

Interfering in the internal affairs of States, sowing sectarian strife, financing and supporting extremist and putschist groups and deploying illegal armed militias are just the tip of the iceberg. The Iranian regime's subversive and destructive policies in the region and its attempts to acquire nuclear weapons must be dealt with firmly in order to avoid further escalation and threats to international peace and security.

My country's Government therefore stresses the need for the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility to halt the actions and policies of Iran in the region, prevent it from acquiring a nuclear weapon and stop it from pursuing its destabilizing nuclear activities — which threaten international peace and security — including the development of a ballistic missile system and other aggressive practices.

Annex 23**Statement by the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, Mathu Joyini**

My delegation expresses its appreciation to Kenya for convening this open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question. We stress the necessity for these open debates to focus on the situation in Palestine and Israel and allow the broader United Nations membership an opportunity to engage on the matter.

South Africa would like to focus its remarks on the following three points: first, the necessity for bona fide negotiations leading to a two-State solution; secondly, the continued flagrant disregard for international humanitarian law and international human rights law; and, thirdly, crimes against humanity and apartheid-like policies and persecution being committed.

South Africa is appalled by the habitual tensions, instability and targeted aggression that innocent Palestinian men, women and children living in the occupied Palestinian Territories are subjected to on a daily basis. That systematic discrimination and repression based on national, ethnic, racial or religious identity goes against the inherent dignity and equal inalienable rights of all of humankind.

South Africa maintains that international efforts must be geared towards the realization of the two-State solution, which has been supported by the United Nations for over seven decades. The two-State solution remains the only path to ensuring that Palestinians and Israelis can both realize their legitimate aspirations, living side-by-side in peaceful and secure States, based on the 1967 borders and with Jerusalem as the capital of both States.

We must ask ourselves: How, then, can a solution be sought, or a successful outcome be attained, if one party is advancing in the direction of the international call for a two-State solution while the other party vehemently pursues an intent of domination through illegal occupation? It is paramount that negotiations ensue with sincerity and bona fide intent.

How long will we bear witness to the flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions by the State of Israel without taking any action. The Security Council has shown that it is prepared to act in other cases where its resolutions are violated. Failing to act on Israeli violations perpetuates the argument that some in the Council are not even-handed when it comes to this matter — and that undermines the Council's credibility.

To uphold the integrity of the Security Council, it is imperative that those who violate Security Council resolutions be held accountable. If the Council wants to be seen as impartial and as discharging its mandate efficiently, it must act accordingly. The Council must be consistent in its approach to addressing conflict situations on its agenda and urge all Member States, across all continents, to adhere to Council resolutions.

In conclusion, South Africa underscores that the continued struggle of the Palestinians should leave an indelible mark on the world's collective consciousness. As Members of the United Nations, we are tasked with the responsibility to oppose oppression. Our morality compels us to use our voice in these international platforms to fight oppression wherever it attempts to creep into the fabric of any society and plague it with the disease of subjugation, segregation, denial of basic human rights, destruction and disregard for international law.

Annex 24**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Syria to the United Nations, Bassam Sabbagh**

[Original: Arabic]

The question of Palestine remains the central national issue for the Syrian Arab Republic, which always has, and always will, spared no effort in standing with the Palestinian people in their struggle to regain their occupied territory and all their legitimate rights, in particular their right to establish an independent State on their territory with Jerusalem as its capital, their right to full membership in the United Nations and the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland, in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, notably General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

The war crimes and crimes against humanity that Israel continues to commit in the occupied Palestinian territory — in particular annexation, settlements, blockades, the seizure and demolition of homes, population expulsions and forced displacement, arbitrary detention practices and racial discrimination against Palestinian citizens — must not be tolerated. In that regard, the Syrian Arab Republic calls for pressure on Israel to stop its criminal practices against the Palestinian people and to hold States supporting Israel responsible for the continuation of those crimes and for Israeli impunity.

The Syrian Arab Republic emphasizes that any resolutions or measures that are incompatible with the relevant United Nations resolutions and that do not preserve established Palestinian rights are unacceptable in form and substance and have no legal effect.

We stress that the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people necessitates full support for the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East so that it is able to implement its mandates and respond to the growing humanitarian needs of the Palestinians.

The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its firm commitment to the return of the entire Syrian Golan, which has been occupied since June 1967, and stresses that all resolutions and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to change its natural and demographic features, or to impose its laws, powers and administration on it, are null and void and have no legal effect under international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular resolution 497 (1981).

The continuation and hysterical repetition of a series of Israeli attacks on the sovereignty of Syrian territory over the past months constitutes a serious escalation that threatens peace and security in the Middle East region. The assassination by gunfire by Israeli occupation authorities of Syrian freedom fighter Midhat Salih al-Salih from inside the occupied Syrian Golan while he was returning to his home in the town of Ayn al-Tinah, which faces the occupied town of Majdal Shams, was a flagrant violation of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement between Israeli and Syrian forces and United Nations resolutions on the occupied Syrian Golan.

That is in addition to the hostile statements made by the Prime Minister of the Israeli occupation entity regarding the expansion of settlements through the establishment of 7,000 settlement units in the occupied Syrian Golan, with the aim of increasing the number of settlers from 40,000 to 100,000 as part of efforts to change the demographic character of the occupied Syrian Golan.

In addition to those statements, on 11 October the so-called Israeli regional strategic economic development conference was held in the settlement of Haspin,

located on the ruins of the Syrian village of Khasfayn, in order to perpetuate and prolong the occupation by establishing more settlement projects in the occupied Syrian Golan. Israeli occupying forces stormed the village of Majdal Shams and arrested Syrian citizen Salman Awad at his home after a vigil organized by our people in the village of Mas'adeh to protest such statements and the accompanying measures to establish settlement projects on their land, such as the project to build "wind turbines" on the territory of the villages of Majdal Shams, Ayn Quniyah, Buqatah and Mas'adah.

The Syrian Arab Republic condemns, in the strongest terms, all those crimes, hostile practices and provocative statements and emphasizes that they will not change the established fact that the Golan was, and will remain, Syrian Arab, that it will inevitably return to the homeland sooner or later and that all actions taken by the Israeli occupation authorities are null and void and have no legal effect. On a daily basis, our steadfast people in the occupied Syrian Golan reassert their attachment to their land as part of their Syrian homeland. They reject the practices of the Israeli occupation and look forward to the complete liberation of the Golan.

The Syrian Arab Republic calls on the Security Council to uphold its responsibilities and pressure the Israeli occupation authorities to stop their violations against Syrian sovereignty and their illegal practices against Syrian citizens of the occupied Syrian Golan. Those crimes include killings, arrests, plunder of property, depriving the residents of the Syrian Golan of natural resources and preventing the return of those who have travelled for study, work or any other reason to their cities and towns in the occupied Syrian Golan. Israel must immediately and without delay open and operate the Qunaytirah crossing, which is the artery connecting our people in the occupied Syrian Golan to their motherland and the lung with which they breathe.

The Syrian Arab Republic asserts that it is unacceptable that the United Nations and the international community continually fail to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to implement the relevant Security Council and United Nations resolutions and to stop its systematic and gross violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. We also emphasize that this situation cannot be ended without the removal of the protection provided to Israel inside and outside the United Nations by the United States of America and its Western allies. The Syrian Arab Republic calls on the Security Council to act immediately to deter Israel from its aggression, oblige it to stop its violations and illegal practices and ensure that it is held accountable and punished for its rogue conduct.

In conclusion, Syria reiterates its regret that Secretariat reports continue to ignore the dangerous reality of systematic Israeli practices and violations against our people suffering under occupation in the Golan. We renew our call for the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, to give the situation in the occupied Syrian Golan the attention demanded by his mandate and to include in his reports detailed information on the violations and practices of the Israeli occupation authorities being perpetrated against our people in the occupied Syrian Golan.

Annex 25**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations, Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu**

I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's open debate on this critical issue.

It is regrettable that Israel's provocative and illegal policies — such as the expansion of illegal settlements, forced evictions, the destruction of Palestinian homes, provocations at Al-Haram Al-Sharif, the use of disproportionate force against Palestinian civilians and initiatives to change the demographic and legal status of Jerusalem — continue unabated.

Israel is advancing its extensive building plans in Givat Hamatos and some other areas in or around Jerusalem that lie beyond Israel's 1967 borders. It is widely reported in the media that the new neighbourhood in Givat Hamatos, with its 1,257 housing units, would become the first new Jewish neighbourhood to be built in Jerusalem in the past 30 years.

The international community must put pressure on Israel to abandon those illegal construction plans.

The ruling of an Israeli court, which claimed that Jews have the right to perform "silent" prayers in the Al-Aqsa Mosque, was yet another provocation in an attempt to erode the status quo at the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Israel's recent actions in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, including the resulting escalation in May, should serve as a wake-up call for the international community. These unilateral actions fuel crises in the region. We call on Israel to cease and desist its provocative policies.

"Economic peace" between Israel and Palestine cannot replace the need for a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The only viable option to put an end to the sufferings of Palestinian people in Gaza is by ending the blockade.

For this reason, we reiterate our support for the judicial processes to hold Israel accountable for its crimes in the occupied territories.

The establishment of an independent, sovereign and contiguous State of Palestine on the basis of the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital is the only viable solution to this conflict.

An urgent return to peace negotiations is critical. Indeed, we must accelerate all efforts to revive the peace process. The Quartet must be revitalized and lead the efforts towards a new peace process. To that end, we support the call of President Mahmoud Abbas to hold an international peace conference.

Moreover, the international community should also support the intra-Palestinian unity process and elections.

We are concerned by the intention of third countries to open embassies in Jerusalem or relocate their embassies from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The status of Jerusalem remains at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This fundamental issue will be one of the most important components of the comprehensive solution of this conflict. We urge Member States to respect the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions pertaining to the status of Jerusalem.

Of course, we have no objection to the establishment of relations between third countries and Israel. However, we are concerned that opening or relocating

embassies to Jerusalem would undermine the parameters of a two-State solution, including the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative.

The latest escalation in May further aggravated the already dire humanitarian and economic situation on the ground in Palestine. The untenable humanitarian conditions, particularly in Gaza, are unacceptable.

The international community cannot turn its back on the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for freedom and dignity any longer.

Unhindered access to Gaza is of paramount importance.

I assure the Council that Turkey will continue to support the Palestinian people in their pursuit of realizing our shared aspirations of peace and respect for, and the protection of, their inherent dignity, rights and freedoms.

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

[Original: Arabic]

The United Arab Emirates supports the statement of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Tor Wennesland, during his briefing to the Security Council last month regarding the importance of reinvigorating efforts to set a legitimate political horizon to advance the peace process and achieve a two-State solution, with the State of Palestine living side by side with Israel in peace, security and mutual recognition.

In that context, the recent period has witnessed positive developments at the diplomatic level that we hope will contribute to providing the conditions for the resumption of the negotiation process and trust-building between the parties. We note the recent high-level meetings between Israeli and Palestinian officials, the recent visit to the region by the United States envoy for Palestinian and Israeli affairs and the tripartite meeting among Egypt, Jordan and Palestine to revive the peace process. The United Arab Emirates welcomes those positive steps and stresses the importance of maintaining the current momentum to advance peace efforts in the Middle East.

As a priority, work should continue to maintain the Egyptian-brokered ceasefire reached between Israel and Palestine following the escalation of violence in May this year. The United Arab Emirates encourages any initiatives that will keep tensions low so that we do not witness a new round of violence, whose consequences could be devastating for the region as a whole. My country also emphasizes the importance of seeking de-escalation throughout the occupied Palestinian territory. As data from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs indicate, there was an increase in the number of casualties among Palestinians over the past month, particularly because of increasing violence from settlers against the population.

All illegal actions and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory that would undermine the two-State solution, including the construction and expansion of settlements, the confiscation and demolition of Palestinian property and the forced displacement of the population, particularly in East Jerusalem, must also be stopped. In that context, the United Arab Emirates stresses the need for Israel to assume its responsibilities in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, including by providing the necessary protection to Palestinian civilians.

We also stress the need to preserve the legal status of the city of Jerusalem in order to enable Palestinians to exercise their religious rites and to respect the historical role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan as Custodian of the city's Islamic and Christian holy places. We emphasize the importance of avoiding any action that would exacerbate tensions in the Holy City of Jerusalem or affect the historical arrangements connected with the Al-Aqsa Mosque in particular.

In conjunction with efforts to revive the Middle East peace process, the United Arab Emirates urges the international community to continue to provide the necessary support to the Palestinian people, especially given the difficult humanitarian and economic situation they face, which has been exacerbated by the coronavirus disease pandemic. Out of its historic commitment to the Palestinian people, the United Arab Emirates contributed more than \$883 million from 2013 to 2021 to finance vital sectors and support development efforts in the occupied Palestinian territory and to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. My country has also sent 60,000 vaccine doses and more than 36.6 tons of

emergency medical assistance to thousands of Palestinian families in the Gaza Strip to enable them to cope with the pandemic. We are renewing our support for efforts to advance reconstruction in the Gaza Strip to alleviate human suffering there and provide economic opportunities, especially for young people, who experience high levels of unemployment.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates reaffirms its unwavering position of absolute support for the Palestinian cause and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. We stress that a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to this issue is the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State on the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Peace Conference, the Arab Peace Initiative and other agreed international terms of reference.
