



# Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

## 7354<sup>th</sup> meeting

Tuesday, 30 December 2014, 5 p.m.

New York

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<i>President:</i>	Mr. Cherif . . . . .	(Chad)
<i>Members:</i>	Argentina . . . . .	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia . . . . .	Mr. Quinlan
	Chile . . . . .	Mr. Barros Melet
	China . . . . .	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France . . . . .	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan . . . . .	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania . . . . .	Mrs. Jakubonė
	Luxembourg . . . . .	Mr. Asselborn
	Nigeria . . . . .	Mrs. Ogwu
	Republic of Korea . . . . .	Mr. Oh Joon
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda . . . . .	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . .	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America . . . . .	Ms. Power

## Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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*The meeting was called to order at 5.15 p.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question**

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I wish to warmly welcome Minister Jean Asselborn of Luxembourg to the Security Council Chamber. His participation is an affirmation of the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Israel to participate in this meeting.

I propose that the Council invite the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine to the United Nations, to participate in the meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2014/916, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Jordan.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

*In favour:*

Argentina, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Luxembourg and Russian Federation

*Against:*

Australia, United States of America

*Abstaining:*

Lithuania, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

**The President** (*spoke in French*): There were 8 votes in favour, 2 votes against and 5 abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the vote.

**Mrs. Kawar** (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you very much, Mr. President, for convening this emergency meeting of the Security Council.

Jordan submitted, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, the text of a special Arab draft resolution (S/2014/916), setting a deadline for ending the Israeli occupation and the establishment of the Palestinian State, in implementation of the resolution of the Council of the League of Arab States at the ministerial level. This is based on our belief that the Security Council must respond to the legitimate Palestinian demand to live in freedom and dignity in its independent, fully sovereign and viable State within the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in peace and security and within secure borders with all other States of the region, in accordance with the accepted terms of reference in this matter, including the relevant resolutions of the Security Council — inter alia, resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) — and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Jordan has proceeded in this process within the Security Council guided by the Arab consensus, and primarily in support of the political decision of the Palestinian leadership, represented by President Mahmoud Abbas. In the Security Council and all other international forums, Jordan will remain at the forefront of the champions of the Palestinian cause and all the rights of the brotherly Palestinian people, because Jordan is committed to resolving this matter and to achieving its own higher, vital interests.

We had hoped that the Security Council would today adopt the draft Arab resolution because the Council bears both the legal and the moral responsibilities to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is the core of the conflict in the Middle East. All elements of the draft resolution were acceptable to the members not only of the Security Council, but of the international community as a whole. These elements include the right of the Palestinian people to sustainable development and to the attainment of a peaceful solution that would end the occupation of Palestinian territory, realize the two-State solution, justly resolve the question of the Palestinian refugees and other issues, and establish East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian State.

The failure to adopt the draft resolution will in no way prevent us from continuing to urge the international

community, and the United Nations in particular, towards effective engagement in achieving a settlement to the conflict. We will continue to work assiduously for a resumption of the peace negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis, within a serious and committed framework, leading to an embodiment of the two-State solution within a reasonable time frame and to an end to the conflict through the resolution of all substantive issues — including Jerusalem, refugees, security, borders and water — pursuant to the accepted international terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative in all its elements and in a manner that fully addresses and protects Jordan's higher, vital interests.

The Jordanian position on this matter is very well known. We submitted the draft resolution without prejudice to our legal positions and on the understanding that its content in no way indicates a change in our positions. Our submission of the draft Arab resolution can in no way be interpreted as a unilateral step. It reflects a legitimate right of the Palestinian people, who have opted for the path of peace and turned to the United Nations as a forum of last resort now that Israel has blocked all paths leading to the achievement of their legitimate aspirations. It is Israel that engages in unilateral moves, including in particular settlement activities and the adoption of discriminatory legislation, such as the Nationality Law, in addition to its other illegal practices in the occupied Palestinian territories, which draw us further away from peace every day and threaten the future of the two-State solution.

The international community must address the gravity of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and the growing suffering of our Palestinian brothers in the Gaza Strip as a result of the most recent Israeli war there. It must recognize that the status quo cannot be maintained without pushing the region into further cycles of violence and conflict. The outcome of today's decision must not prevent us from stepping up our efforts through consultations, negotiations and discussions with a view to achieving a just and comprehensive solution of the Palestinian question, leading to the establishment of a contiguous, viable, independent and sovereign Palestinian State in the context of the two-State solution, in a manner that protects the peace and security of all in the region. We must pursue our efforts until we achieve that noble objective.

**Ms. Power** (United States of America): In recent years, no Government has invested more in the effort

to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace than the United States. Peace, however difficult it may be to forge, is too important to give up on. As we were reminded this summer in Gaza, and as we have been reminded too painfully recently in Jerusalem and the West Bank, the human consequences of ensuing cycles of violence are too grave. The United States searches every day for new ways to take constructive steps to support the parties in making progress towards achieving a negotiated settlement.

The draft resolution (S/2014/916) put before us today is not one of those constructive steps. It would undermine efforts to get back to an atmosphere that would make it possible to achieve two States for two peoples. Regrettably, instead of giving voice to the aspirations of Palestinians and Israelis alike, the text addresses the concerns of only one side. It is deeply imbalanced and contains many elements that are not conducive to negotiations between the parties, including unconstructive deadlines that take no account of Israel's legitimate security concerns. In addition, the draft resolution was put to a vote without a discussion or due consideration among Council members, which is highly unusual, especially considering the gravity of the matter at hand. We must proceed responsibly, and not take actions that would risk creating a downward spiral.

We voted against the draft resolution not because we are comfortable with the status quo; we voted against it because we know what everyone here knows as well — that peace will come from hard choices and compromises that must be made at the negotiating table. Today's staged confrontation in the Security Council will not bring the parties closer to achieving a two-State solution. We voted against the draft resolution not because we are indifferent to the daily hardships or the security threats endured by Palestinians and Israelis, but because we know that those hardships will not cease and those threats will not subside until the parties reach a comprehensive settlement achieved through negotiations. The draft resolution sets the stage for more division, not for compromise. It could well serve to provoke the very confrontation it purports to address.

For decades, the United States has worked to try to help achieve a comprehensive end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and we remain committed to achieving the peace that both the Palestinians and the Israelis deserve — two States for two peoples,

with a sovereign, viable and independent Palestine living side by side in peace and security with a Jewish and democratic Israel. The United States does not just acknowledge the tremendous frustrations and disappointments on both sides over the years in pursuit of peace — we share them, and we understand the immense challenges that the parties need to overcome to make peace a reality. Yet at the same time, we firmly believe that the status quo between Israelis and Palestinians is unsustainable.

The United States recognizes the role that the Council has played before in advancing a sustainable end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including through resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1515 (2003), which calls for the creation of a Palestinian State alongside Israel, with both States living “side by side within secure and recognized borders”. In a May 2011 speech, President Obama elaborated further that

“the United States believes that negotiations should result in two States with permanent Palestinian borders with Israel, Jordan, and Egypt, and permanent Israeli borders with Palestine... based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps, so that secure and recognized borders are established for both States”.

He made clear that the

“The Palestinian people must have the right to govern themselves, and reach their full potential, in a sovereign and contiguous State”.

The United States will continue reaching out to the parties in an effort to find a way forward, and we are ready to engage and support them when they are ready to return to the table. We will continue to oppose actions by both sides that we view as detrimental to the cause of peace, whether those actions come in the form of settlement activity or imbalanced draft resolutions in the Council. The parties have a responsibility to negotiate and own the hard choices that will be needed if they are to bring real and long-overdue change to their region to benefit their people.

Today’s vote should not be interpreted as a victory for an unsustainable status quo. Instead, it should serve as a wake-up call to catalyse all interested parties to take constructive, responsible steps to achieve a two-State solution, which remains the only way to bring an end to the ongoing cycle of violence and suffering. We hope that those who share our vision for peace between two States — Israel and Palestine, both secure,

democratic and prosperous — will join us in redoubling efforts to find a path forward that can rally international consensus, advance future negotiations and provide a horizon of hope for Palestinians and Israelis alike.

**Mr. Asselborn** (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): In July of last year, after three years of stagnation, the United States administration had extracted an agreement on a resumption of direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. We all began to hope again. Nine months later, despite intense negotiations and the tireless efforts of Secretary of State John Kerry, the negotiations once again ended in deadlock. In the summer of 2014, war began again as Gaza was bombed relentlessly for more than 50 days. The ceasefire agreement of 26 August ended the fighting, but the negotiations on lifting the blockade of Gaza are still stalled. We have witnessed dangerous tensions on the Temple Mount, the unbridled pursuit of colonization and cycles of revenge between extremists with a real risk of a new intifada at the end of it all. The recent rocket attacks from Gaza illustrated once again the volatility of a situation without a political horizon.

It is time to create that political horizon. The time has come to take bold, concrete measures designed to achieve a just and lasting peace. Israel has the right to live in peace and security. But it is clear to us that the security of the State of Israel depends on the creation beside it of a sovereign, democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine, based on the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as the capital of the two States. A two-State solution is the only one that can be fair, both politically and morally. There is no alternative.

By voting today for the draft resolution submitted by Jordan on behalf of the Arab Group (S/2014/916), Luxembourg voted for that two-State solution — two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. We voted for a solution that we have advocated throughout our term on the Security Council and one that has consistently been a priority of our foreign policy. We voted for a peace settlement that meets the legitimate aspirations of both Israel and Palestine.

If the two-State solution is to be saved, we must learn the lessons of the past. Israelis and Palestinians will be able to reach an agreement only if the international community commits more positively than it has in the past and establishes the framework for a settlement with clear parameters and a specific timetable. That was the entire purpose of the draft resolution introduced by

Jordan. Despite the outcome of today's vote, we remain convinced that the Security Council can and should play a constructive role in this matter. If it is to live up to its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Council must take on a more active role in supporting and preserving a two-State solution and ending the occupation.

Our vote today is an expression of belief — the belief that it is urgent that we act, and act now, and that we cannot postpone deadlines indefinitely. Salvaging a two-State solution cannot be extended *ad infinitum*. Our vote today is aimed at no one. It is not about dividing or pointing fingers. On the contrary, it aspires to be a vote for hope. In voting for a two-State solution, we appeal to the parties — to Israeli and Palestinian political officials, as well as to Israeli and Palestinian citizens — asking them choose the path of reconciliation and the resumption of negotiations. We call on the countries of the region and the international community as a whole to work resolutely beside the Israelis and Palestinians so that peaceful co-existence between two States, the State of Israel and the State of Palestine, can finally become a reality.

We regret that it was not possible today to adopt the draft resolution submitted by Jordan, but we very much hope that after the vote it will soon be possible to resume discussions in good faith and work together for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, in the interests of Israel and Palestine and the whole region. We no longer have the right to fail. The year 2015 must not be another year lost for peace in the Middle East.

**Sir Mark Lyall Grant** (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom understands and shares the deep frustration with the lack of progress on the Middle East peace process and the unacceptability and unsustainability of the status quo. A just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is long overdue. We will continue to spare no effort to turn our ambition — the creation of a sovereign, contiguous and viable Palestinian State, living in peace and security side by side with Israel — into reality.

We have long believed that direct negotiations towards a two-State solution should be on the basis of clear, internationally agreed parameters. I recall that in February 2011 I set out in this Chamber our view of what those should be (see S/PV.6484), in a joint explanation of vote by the United Kingdom, France and Germany on a draft resolution on settlements

(S/2011/24). We therefore welcome the idea of a Security Council resolution on the Middle East peace process that sets out those parameters. However, agreeing on such a resolution requires proper time for consultation and negotiation of the draft resolution, including on its timing. We consider President Abbas a man of peace, and understand the pressure that the Palestinian leadership has been under to act and its frustration with the lack of progress, but we are disappointed that the normal and necessary negotiation did not take place on this occasion.

The United Kingdom supports much of the content of the draft resolution (S/2014/916). It was therefore with deep regret that we abstained on it. The United Kingdom stands by the parameters I set out here in 2011, which were reiterated by the European Union Foreign Affairs Council conclusions in July. Our views on settlements, including in East Jerusalem, are clear. They are illegal under international law, an obstacle to peace and seriously damage the prospects for a two-State solution. All settlement activity, including in East Jerusalem, should cease immediately. We call on all parties not to take unilateral steps that would make the search for a peace based on negotiations harder.

Given the fact that today's draft resolution was not adopted, the United Kingdom would like to work with partners to revisit the idea of a parameters resolution on the Middle East peace process in 2015. We are convinced that it is possible, with further time and effort, to secure, for the first time ever, a resolution that commands full Security Council support.

**Mr. Delattre** (France) (*spoke in French*): Since the peace negotiations ended in April, the situation has deteriorated and we are dealing with two threats. On the one hand, the essential two-State solution is on its way to becoming a mirage. The ongoing illegal settlements undermine the viability of a Palestinian State on the ground. In Israel as in Palestine, public opinion has become radicalized. On the other hand, the cycles of violence are accelerating from Gaza to the West Bank via Jerusalem. Conditions are coming together for a widespread conflagration.

We know the heart of the problem — the absence of political prospects that respond to the legitimate demands and needs of both peoples, Israeli and Palestinian: for the Palestinians, the aspiration to a sovereign and independent State; for the Israelis, the guarantee of lasting security. These two legitimate

claims can be resolved only if there is movement towards the well-known solution of a division of territory that allows for the emergence of two States for two peoples.

France believes in the possibility of a definitive and just settlement for the parties. We must give ourselves the means to achieve it. Those means are collective. Each successive failure in negotiations over the past 20 years reminds us that the peace process as we have practiced it must evolve. The parties cannot, largely for domestic reasons, take on their own the difficult decisions required to conclude negotiations. The United States cannot bear the burden alone for seeking this difficult peace. After more than 25 years of negotiations, the international community must share the burden of those negotiations and assume its portion of the political and historical responsibility.

France is determined to promote the emergence of a method that enables closer support for the negotiations on the part of the relevant international partners, complementing and supporting the major role played by Washington, D.C., including the European Union, the League of Arab States and permanent members of the Council. This collective effort must be based on the unquestionable foundation that only the Security Council can offer to lend credibility to the negotiations. It is incumbent upon us to identify the internationally recognized parameters for the negotiations and the settlement of the conflict leading to the satisfaction of the various claims. That is what the Council and its members were called upon today to do in fully assuming their responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

It is from that perspective that we have consistently called upon the Council to act in order to establish a credible basis for peace. France wanted to offer, in the form of a draft resolution, a constructive, reasonable and consensual alternative for the initial Palestinian text so that the Security Council can become a positive actor in the conflict and not the theatre of protestations, theoretical declarations and successive vetoes.

In response to this positive and good-faith approach, unfortunately no credible negotiation has yet been engaged, despite the fact that the deterioration of the situation on the ground demands immediate action. Moved by the urgent need to act, by the profound necessity of an adjustment in method, and by the responsibility incumbent on each member of the Security Council, we therefore voted in favour of the draft resolution submitted by Jordan. That does not

mean that the text is ideal. We have reservations on some of the terminology, as well as on the way the draft resolution was submitted.

We would have preferred and continue to hope for a consensual approach to unite all members of the Council around the clear and well-known vision of an independent, sovereign and democratic Palestinian State living in peace and security side by side with Israel, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States. If the terms of a just solution for Palestinian refugees and the details of security arrangements, including the withdrawal of Israeli forces, are part of the agreement to be concluded between the parties, we can and must collectively establish the broad parameters of the negotiations. We also need to set a clear timetable for their conclusion, because negotiations that never come to an end can enjoy no credibility. The French proposal allows just that.

France regrets that it was not possible today to reach a consensus on these points, which should unite the international community. But our efforts must not stop there; our responsibility is to try again before it is too late. France will therefore pursue its action.

**Mr. Churkin** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation regrets that the Security Council was unable to adopt draft resolution S/2014/916, which would have strengthened the generally recognized international legal basis for the Middle East peace process, including the resolutions of the Security Council, the Madrid terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative. Recent events in the Middle East have illustrated with new force the undeniable truth that alternatives to a genuinely collective approach to resolving such a complex problem do not exist, especially since the almost 70 years of unresolved conflict are one of the most serious factors in the destabilization of the whole region. They serve as a very strong argument in the hands of those who recruit extremists, convincing them that seeking political solutions is pointless.

We are convinced that in order to step up and reinvigorate collective efforts in this area, we need not only a greater profile for the Quartet, with the involvement with the League of Arab States in its work, but also a general broader involvement of the Security Council in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process. That of course should give the process new impetus and focus the parties on more responsible steps towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

We do not share the objections of those who believe that the draft resolution would undermine the prospects for the negotiating process. Unfortunately, the past year has revealed that the process has wandered into a blind alley, with its monopolization by the United States and its pull-back from the Quartet. We believe this to be a strategic mistake, as is the dismissal of our proposals to brainstorm in the Council in order to find ways to reinvigorate the negotiation process, including by sending a Council mission to the Middle East. Moreover, the conflict in the Holy Land is deepening; regularly and with increasing fury, violence erupts on both sides. The construction of illegal settlements in the occupied territories continues, including in East Jerusalem, undermining the chances for the implementation of the two-State solution.

We are coming to the end of 2014, which the international community has proclaimed the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Have we come any closer to implementing the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinians this year? Are we closer or farther from the two-State solution? Unfortunately, the answer is obvious. The Security Council's inaction on this matter dooms the situation to a dangerous status quo that we cannot accept. One chance for hope is not enough.

**Mr. Quinlan** (Australia): Australia remains committed to a future where Israeli and a Palestinian State exist side by side in peace and security within internationally recognized borders. As such, our efforts must be focused on constructively encouraging the parties to return to direct negotiations towards that goal. Regrettably, the draft resolution under consideration today (S/2014/916) will not help this process, and that is why we voted against it. It lacks balance and seeks to impose a solution put forward by one party alone. Final status issues can be resolved only between the two sides; a process agreed by both sides is the only way forward to reach an enduring agreement.

The violence experienced in recent months in the Palestinian territories and Israel underlines the terrible human costs of the failure of final status negotiations and how fragile the situation is in the absence of genuine progress towards establishing a Palestinian State, an objective in which Australia believes and to which we are committed. Australia urges all parties to refrain from provocative actions and leaders from both sides to show real courage in returning to the difficult path of peace negotiations.

**Mr. Barros Melet** (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile's position vis-à-vis the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, has been expressed by my country in this and other international forums, and is widely known. We support negotiations between the parties and a solution that would allow both States to live in peace and security, within safe and internationally recognized borders. Two decades into the peace process that was launched in Oslo, we believe that the time has come to implement the two-State solution. The Security Council has a role to play in that matter, and can contribute to the resumption of dialogue in the context of its responsibility in the maintenance of peace and security.

Assuming its international responsibility, and consistent and conscious of its role in this organ, Chile voted in favour of draft resolution S/2014/916. We are not pleased with the exercise as it has unfolded, with scant space for negotiation and dialogue among Council members and the stakeholders. As we see it, negotiation is essential to achieving the necessary consensus that makes the collective action of the Council effective in its search for viable solutions. However, as we see it, we have given priority to the urgent need to address the situation on the ground and to the conviction that it is possible to achieve a political outcome allowing for renewed momentum in the negotiations. The conflict in Gaza in July and August and the events of recent months in the West Bank and East Jerusalem have shown that the status quo is unsustainable. After 46 years of occupation, the Palestinian people hold fast to the hope of full sovereignty and independence. Chile supports those legitimate aspirations.

We are aware that there are different visions in the Council, and that some delegations believe that the time for action is not ripe politically. It is such a complex matter that it will never be easy to determine when the right time has come to act. Chile, however, will continue to contribute to the process because we are convinced that the solution to the conflict requires the inclusive and realistic resolve of many actors who, directly or indirectly, can pave the way towards dialogue and peace.

**Mrs. Ogwu** (Nigeria): Nigeria believes in the critical role of the Security Council in seeking a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles of land for peace, the road map for peace in the Middle East, and the Arab Peace Initiative. We are

convinced that the collective action of the Council is critical in advancing and expediting the peace process, and serves as the most important catalyst in ending the protracted conflict.

Nigeria's perspectives on the question of Palestine have been consistently guided by its position regarding the rule of law and respect for the principles of international law and justice. We have an abiding respect for the legitimacy of the aspirations of the Palestinian people to self-determination, independence and dignity. That is why we encourage both sides to demonstrate greater flexibility in their long-term strategic interests. Indeed, there is no alternative to a two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living together side by side in peace, stability and security. Nigeria remains very supportive of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, independence and dignity. We are also mindful of the need to guarantee Israel's security and existence as a sovereign State. It is for that reason that we support the comprehensive discussion of all final status issues.

The ultimate path to lasting peace lies in the negotiated solution, and the time is ripe for both sides to return to the peace talks.

**Mr. Oh Joon** (Republic of Korea): On the issue of the Middle East peace process, the Republic of Korea has supported the two-State solution as the only viable way to build a lasting peace in the region. We fully understand and empathize with the aspiration of the Palestinian people to have an independent State of their own. We believe that such an aspiration is in accordance with the right of the Palestinian people, as embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. To that end, we believe that direct negotiations between the parties are indispensable for realizing two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace with secure and recognized borders. In that process, any unilateral action by either party will be counterproductive and hinder genuine progress, especially as paragraph 10 of the draft resolution S/2014/916 calls upon both parties to abstain from any unilateral actions.

That is why the Republic of Korea abstained in today's voting. Given the deteriorating situation in the Middle East, we agree with the Secretary-General's repeated warning that time is not on the side of peace. We share the view that the longer the present state of insecurity continues, the further the path to genuine peace will be. However, that is all the more reason for each side to exercise restraint and not worsen the

situation by engaging in a unilateral action. Once again, we urge all parties to respect previous agreements and return to the negotiating table to work out a viable agreement with a two-State solution at its core.

**Mr. Liu Jieyi** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China voted in favour of draft resolution S/2014/916 on the question of Palestine submitted by Jordan on behalf of the League of Arab States. The draft reflects the reasonable demands of the Arab States, including the Palestinian people, and is in accord with the relevant United Nations resolutions, the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative, the road map for peace in the Middle East, and China's consistent position. We express deep regret over the failure of the draft resolution to be adopted. China is highly attentive to the Palestinian-Israeli question and has always made constructive efforts to advance the Middle East peace process.

In 2013, President Xi Jinping of China put forward four proposals on the Palestinian-Israeli question. This year, Minister for Foreign Affairs Wang Yi of China proposed five points for resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. China supports the just cause of restoring the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people; establishing a fully sovereign and independent State of Palestine, based on the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital; and Palestine's accession to membership of the United Nations and other international organizations.

China hopes that Palestine and Israel will resume peace talks as soon as possible, end the occupation at an early date and achieve peaceful coexistence. The Middle East peace process is now in deep stalemate and the tensions between Palestine and Israel persist. We call upon the international community to redouble its efforts to help Palestine and Israel to end the cycle of violence and return to the correct track of peace talks. We call upon the Security Council to effectively assume responsibility for the Palestinian-Israeli question and to play its due role.

China is willing to join the relevant stakeholders within the international community in their common efforts, and will continue to play a constructive role in promoting a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

**Mr. Nduhungirehe** (Rwanda): Rwanda takes the floor to explain its vote on draft resolution S/2014/916 on the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

We note with appreciation the efforts of Jordan in drafting and submitting the text on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

Rwanda's position on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, as reiterated every month in our two-year membership of the Council, is well known. Our country, as well as all States members of the African Union, has always been in favour of a two-State solution. We regret, however, that despite the efforts of regional and international actors, including Arab States, the Quartet and the United States, there is yet to be a breakthrough in the peace process.

For Rwanda, any final settlement to the conflict should be achieved through direct and genuine negotiations, however painful they may be. We fully believe that only a negotiated settlement between the parties will result in the emergence of an independent, sovereign, and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel. In this regard, the Security Council and other stakeholders should step up their efforts to ensure the resumption of direct negotiations for a just and lasting solution of the Israel–Palestinian conflict, building on previously agreed frameworks. The parties, for their part, should make serious commitments to addressing the underlying causes of the conflict and refrain from any provocative action that could undermine the prospects for a durable peace in the region.

In this context, Rwanda does not believe that any unilateral action by either side could bring lasting peace to the region and a final and comprehensive settlement to this crisis. On the contrary, unilateral initiatives, well-intentioned as they may be, could jeopardize the current situation, which is already very fragile. We believe that a Security Council resolution could help the parties to speed up the conclusion of negotiations for the establishment of a Palestinian State, provided that such a resolution were consensual, as it should be agreed on by the negotiating parties and supported by all major stakeholders. Therefore, Rwanda believes that the proposed draft, which has not garnered consensus in the region or within the Council, could not help parties to achieve that goal.

Moreover, it is regrettable that the 15 members of the Security Council were not given a single opportunity to discuss, negotiate and improve the draft, which was drafted, negotiated and amended outside the Council. All those reasons — the lack of a consensual approach in the region, the negative impact on the peace process,

and a lack of an inclusive and transparent procedure in New York — explain Rwanda's abstention in the voting today. Going forward, we would invite all Council members, in coordination with the negotiating parties, the Arab Group and other stakeholders to work together towards a more consensual draft resolution, which should give a new impetus to the peace process.

To conclude, we firmly believe that, given the current and irreversible momentum for peace, the status quo will no longer be an option. There is a unique window for the international community and the negotiating parties to act decisively if we wish to realize our common vision of two viable States for two vibrant peoples, living side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition of each other's legitimate rights. The Government of Rwanda will remain fully committed to this process and contribute, as much as it can, to a peaceful and lasting solution to this crisis, which has been going on for too long.

**Mrs. Jakubonė** (Lithuania): It is with regret that Lithuania had to abstain in the voting on draft resolution S/2014/916 before the Council today. Our vote should not be understood as an abstention on the solution itself. On the contrary, most elements of the draft resolution constitute a good basis for further collective work in establishing parameters for peace negotiations seeking an agreed and peaceful settlement of Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

We would like to make it clear that there is no substitute for direct talks between the parties, and we call for an immediate resumption of negotiations. It is through negotiations that a final, just, fair and agreed settlement of the conflict can be achieved. It is through negotiations that a realization of the two-State solution can become a reality in which Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign and viable Palestine live side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition.

Furthermore, a resumption of negotiations is a matter of urgency. The unsustainable situation in Gaza, the recent increase of violence in Jerusalem and the West Bank, and the deteriorating regional context underline the need for a comprehensive peace, ending all claims and fulfilling the legitimate aspirations of both parties, including those of Israelis to security and those of Palestinians to statehood. People on both sides, along with the international community, expect their leaders to show real leadership by taking responsible, pragmatic and bold action to guarantee their security

and prosperous future. Any unilateral action is detrimental to a resumption of peace negotiations, and consequently to a final and peaceful settlement of the conflict.

**Mrs. Perceval** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina believes that an explanation of its affirmative vote is unnecessary. The history of the Palestinian people, international law and resolutions of the United Nations are the deepest justification of the position taken by my country. We lament that the Security Council has not today adopted a draft resolution that sought to express the justice of the Palestinian cause. But members of the Council must know that no resolution can block the resolve of a people to be free and independent and, above all, to maintain their dignity. Each one of us will have to be responsible for the consequences of what just happened in this Chamber.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Chad.

At the outset, I would like to thank the delegation of Jordan for having introduced draft resolution S/2014/916 on the Palestinian question, on behalf of the Arab States.

In recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to a viable sovereign State within the pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, Chad voted in favour of the draft resolution, which the Security Council unfortunately did not adopt. We can only express our deepest disappointment and staunch regret at the rejection of this text, the relevant, moderate and balanced nature of which were such that it should have garnered the support of all members of the Security Council.

The text of the resolution would have allowed us to put an end to the interminable cycle of negotiations that have served only to perpetuate the Israeli occupation and undermine all international efforts seeking to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The text does not go against the principle of direct negotiations between the two parties but rather envisions a new framework for negotiations that would guarantee the active participation of all stakeholders alongside the two parties concerned. Moreover, the text clearly defines the parameters of a solution: the security mechanisms guaranteeing and respecting the sovereignty of a Palestinian State with the gradual and complete withdrawal of the Israeli security forces from the occupied territories, and the fair and equitable

settlement of the issue of Palestinian refugees as well as inherent final status issues.

In rejecting the draft resolution, the Security Council has again squandered an historical opportunity and disappointed all of those who have been outraged for many years by the absence of any prospect of a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The rejection of the draft resolution also sends a very negative message encouraging the continuation of the occupation, injustice, oppression and destruction, thereby promoting the entrenchment of the most extreme positions on both sides. Furthermore, the Council had the opportunity to strengthen the advocates of peace in the region and to give the Palestinians a glimmer of hope after the failure of direct negotiations that had gained next to nothing.

Today, the international public has seen the sad reality of the Palestinian people being deprived once again of their legitimate right to live in an independent, sovereign State. In view of the unrest in the Middle East and the spread of violence and terrorism, it is in the interests of all parties, including the Security Council, to urgently find a durable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Chad remains persuaded that the only solution is two independent, democratic States, living side by side, in peace and security within mutually and internationally recognized borders.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

**Mr. Mansour** (Palestine): I come before the Security Council on behalf of the leadership of the State of Palestine and the Palestinian people — a long-suffering, yet proud and dignified people who remain steadfast and fully committed to the achievement of their inalienable rights, justice and their legitimate national aspirations, including to self-determination, freedom and independence, and who remain committed to the pursuit of political, diplomatic, peaceful and non-violent means for the achievement of those objectives, for which there is overwhelming and long-standing global support.

We have endured the passage of yet another year that has inflicted on the Palestinian people more loss and tragedy and seen the deterioration of the situation on all fronts due to the illegal, destructive and oppressive actions of Israel, the occupying Power. It

has been a year that has witnessed the breakdown of yet another political process, despite the genuine efforts of the United States, with the full support of the League of Arab States and all other major stakeholders and the good faith efforts and cooperation of Palestine, and the deepening of another political impasse due to brazen Israeli intransigence, creating a totally unsustainable situation, as roundly acknowledged by all.

Despite all of that, the Security Council has once again failed to uphold its Charter duties to address those crises and to meaningfully contribute to a peaceful and lasting solution in accordance with its own resolutions. As the Security Council has looked on this year, our people under Israeli occupation have endured the further theft and colonization of their land, the demolition of their homes, daily military raids, the arrest and detention of thousands of civilians, including children, rampant settler terrorism, constant affronts to their human dignity, repeated incursions at our holiest sites in occupied East Jerusalem, in particular, and extreme provocations and incitement, raising tensions to an all-time high and threatening to ignite a religious war and completely destabilize the situation on the ground.

The brutalization of the Palestinian people reached a new apex of savagery with the Israeli military aggression waged against the besieged and blockaded Gaza Strip in July and August. The Israeli occupying forces launched tens of thousands of missiles, bombs, artillery shells and live ammunition against the defenseless Palestinian civilian population in an inhumane, barbaric and criminal onslaught that killed more than 2,200 Palestinians, the majority of whom were civilians, including children and women; injured and maimed more than 11,000 people; displaced hundreds of thousands; terrorized the entire population; and caused the vast destruction of homes, vital civilian infrastructure and hospitals and schools, including more than 100 United Nations facilities, the majority of which were United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East schools, as well as mosques and churches, agricultural properties and industries.

All of this was perpetrated wantonly and willfully by Israel, creating widespread devastation, human trauma and a massive humanitarian disaster. Gross human rights violations and grave breaches of international humanitarian law — war crimes — were undoubtedly committed by Israel, the occupying Power.

And in the diaspora, the millions of Palestine refugees who remain exiled from their homeland continue to endure instability and vulnerability due to crises and conflicts in the region that have inflicted further displacement and loss on them, with the tragedy in Syria, in particular, engulfing the lives and futures of so many Palestinians.

This was the year that has brought us to this day — a year that has deepened the decades-long suffering and injustice borne by the Palestinian people and that has taken us farther and farther away from the realization of the just, lasting and comprehensive peace we have long sought on the basis of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

It was in that grave context that the Palestinian Government, under the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas, undertook in early September the initiative that has now been brought before the Council. The initiative was meant to mobilize the Security Council to act to defuse the volatile situation and reaffirm the basis for justly resolving the conflict, redressing that historic injustice and providing a forward political horizon that could restore hope to our people that the 47-year Israeli military occupation of their land and their oppression would soon be ended by the delineation of a time frame to that purpose, and that justice, freedom and peace were within reach.

We sincerely thank all of the countries that took a principled stand and voted in favour of draft resolution S/2014/916. We thank Argentina, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Luxembourg and the Russian Federation, as well as all of the friendly countries that supported us throughout the long process. We express special gratitude to the States members of the Arab Group for all of their support, and thank Jordan for its efforts on behalf of the Group, in its capacity as the Arab representative on the Security Council, including its submission and sponsorship of the draft resolution and its call for the vote. We also thank France for its serious efforts and responsible engagement throughout the process and for its support. I also wish to thank His Excellency Mr. Jean Asselborn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, for his presence at today's meeting and his country's support.

We deeply regret, however, that the Council was unable to adopt the draft resolution, despite four months of efforts, patience and flexibility and our serious attempts to engage, and despite the fact that the draft reflected the long-standing international consensus

on a solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In clear terms, firmly rooted in the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, this draft resolution reaffirmed the well-known parameters for a just and lasting solution and set forth a clear timeline for negotiating a final peace agreement, with strong support by major stakeholders, including the concept of an international conference, as well as a timeline for bringing the illegitimate Israeli occupation to a complete end and for achieving the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, living side by side with Israel in peace and security, and just solutions for all core issues, including the plight of the Palestine refugees.

Yet the result of today's voting shows that the Security Council as a whole is clearly not ready and willing to shoulder its responsibilities in a way that would allow for the adoption of a comprehensive resolution and allow us to open the doors for peace and for a just and lasting solution based on international law. It also shows that the Security Council is out of step with the overwhelming global consensus and the calls for an end to the Israeli occupation, an end to this prolonged conflict, and the achievement of the long-overdue the independence of the Palestinian people in their own State.

In contrast to the result of today's voting, it is clear that both inside and outside of the Security Council there is a global consensus on the two-State solution on the pre-1967 borders and on the fact that the annexation of East Jerusalem is illegal and not accepted by any single country. There is also a global consensus on the illegality of Israeli settlement activities in all their manifestations and the illegality of the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip and the need for their immediate end. And there is clearly a global consensus on the legitimacy of the national aspirations and rights of the Palestinian people and the responsibility of the international community in helping to bring them to fulfilment.

So we must ask the Council: why is it so difficult for the Security Council to act on this global consensus and demand an end to illegal Israeli actions and an end to the Israeli occupation — which the Council has called for repeatedly, from resolution 242 (1967) on — and the implementation of the two-State solution in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative? Why

have the efforts of the Arab Group, with the full support of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and all other friends worldwide, to legislate this consensus through the Security Council as a contribution towards putting an end to this conflict through peaceful, political, diplomatic, civilized and non-violent means, been repeatedly blocked? Why are we facing another Security Council failure as the situation unravels and international peace and security are further threatened?

Considering the unsustainable and precarious situation that now prevails and the need to act responsibly on behalf of our people to address their needs and national aspirations, the Palestinian leadership must now consider its next steps. They will meet tomorrow and decide on those next steps.

We are grateful for the support of all brotherly and friendly countries in support of the just cause of Palestine and in support of this continuing journey to fulfil the inalienable human rights of our people and make peace a reality, despite the many challenges and obstacles.

Accordingly, we reiterate in this Council Chamber the absolute imperative to hold Israel, the occupying Power, accountable for its violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and its violations of United Nations resolutions. Such contempt must not continue to be excused or tolerated. There can be no excuse for denial of the right to self-determination of another people, as loudly reaffirmed in the General Assembly this month with the vote on the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination receiving the overwhelming support of 181 States members of the Assembly.

The message is clear worldwide: it is high time to end this abhorrent Israeli occupation and the impunity that has brought our people so much suffering and caused so many crises, sown so much instability and anger throughout our region, and that continues to seriously undermine regional and global peace and security. This message has been strongly conveyed in the numerous resolutions adopted once again this year by the General Assembly on all aspects of the question of Palestine. It has also been strongly reaffirmed at the recent Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention convened by the depositary, Switzerland. And it has been and continues to be reaffirmed in the motions by numerous European parliaments calling for recognition of the State of

Palestine and in the fact that 135 countries already recognize our State, with the most recent recognition affirmed by Sweden, which we salute from this Chamber. This message continues to be conveyed loudly by civil society the world over, with massive displays of support for the just cause of Palestine and the rights of the Palestinian people and the calls for a just and lasting solution.

It is thus most regrettable that the Security Council remains paralysed and unable to act to uphold its own responsibilities in this regard, with all of the implications this has for peace and security in the Middle East and beyond. It must be understood that the repeated requests for us to wait, and wait, and wait while our people are suffering, while our people are besieged, while our land is being colonized, and while the two-State solution is being destroyed and the prospects for peace are evaporating, are not viable under these circumstances and unsustainable.

Those eager to save the two-State solution must act and cannot continue to make excuses for Israel and to permit, and thus be complicit in, its immoral and illegal behaviour. The Security Council must act. We will therefore continue to call on the Council to uphold its Charter duties and will spare no effort in this regard in the coming year. The time has come for the international community to act collectively and firmly to end the occupation that began in 1967 and to allow for the independence of the State of Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, and a just solution for the plight of the Palestine refugees on the basis of resolution 194 (III), and for the ultimate realization of justice, freedom and peace. The Palestinian people and

the world can no longer wait. That message, despite the regrettable outcome today, is especially clear.

In closing, I wish to thank you personally, Mr. President, and the friendly delegation of Chad for your speedy response to the call to convene this meeting and vote, and to reiterate our deepest gratitude to all Council members who righteously and honourably supported the draft resolution. We also take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the non-permanent members of the Security Council that will end their tenure tomorrow — Argentina, Australia, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea and Rwanda — and congratulate them on their efforts and service on the Council over the past two years.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

**Mr. Nitzan** (Israel): The Palestinians have found every possible opportunity to avoid direct negotiations with Israel. They have engaged in a never-ending string of political games, and now they are parading into the Council Chamber with a preposterous unilateral proposal.

I have news for the Palestinians: you cannot agitate and provoke your way to a State. I urge the Council to stop indulging the Palestinians and to put an end to their march of folly.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.*