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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. De Almeida Filho	(Brazil)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Mr. Stastoli
	China	Mr. Xing Jisheng
	France	Mrs. Dime Labille
	Gabon	Ms. Koumby Missambo
	Ghana	Mr. Boateng
	India	Mr. Setia
	Ireland	Ms. Kelly
	Kenya	Ms. Nthoki
	Mexico	Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco
	Norway	Mr. Tetzschner
	Russian Federation	Mr. Khloponin
	United Arab Emirates	Mr. AlMatrooshi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Mansfield
	United States of America	Mr. Kelley

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting resumed at 3.05 p.m.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than three minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I will try to be brief, but my statement was delayed to this afternoon because of the lengthy statements that were made in the Security Council this morning.

Pakistan thanks the Brazilian presidency for convening this open debate on the situation in the Middle East and Palestine.

Pakistan expresses its deep concern about the continued deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including occupied Jerusalem, especially the Al-Aqsa Mosque and Al-Haram Al-Sharif. Pakistan condemns the continued killing and wounding of Palestinian civilians, including children, as well as the demolition of Palestinian homes, the forcible displacement of Palestinian families and the brazen murder of Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh.

The forty-eighth ministerial meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Islamic countries adopted the Islamabad declaration, which, inter alia, re-emphasized the centrality of the question of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif for the Muslim Ummah, reaffirming its principled and continued all-level support to the Palestinian people to regain their inalienable, legitimate national rights, including their right to self-determination and the independence of the State of Palestine along the 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

It also reaffirmed that Al-Quds Al-Sharif is an integral part of the occupied Palestinian territory of the State of Palestine and called on the international community to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to desist from its colonial practices and abide by all international resolutions on the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and refrain from all measures, practices and decisions aimed at altering the character and legal status of the holy city.

First, there is no question in anybody's mind that Israel's actions in the occupied Palestinian lands, its seizure of land and properties for Israeli settlements, its violence against unarmed Palestinian children, women

and men and its blockade of Gaza are grave violations of Security Council resolutions and international law, including humanitarian law.

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 resolutions of the Council is legitimate. Israel's repression of the occupied Palestinian people is illegitimate.

Thirdly, the perpetuation of the Israeli occupation will not bring peace to the holy land. If history is a guide, even if they are dispossessed and disempowered by Israel, every succeeding generation of Palestinians will persist in seeking its freedom and fundamental rights, including the right to self-determination, as well as the two-State solution formula involving the establishment of a sovereign, contiguous and viable Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel within recognized and accepted pre-set 1967 boundaries, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, which offers the only solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. A peace process to achieve that objective must be revived.

It is regrettable that the Council has failed to reassert the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law in occupied Palestine. It has not condemned Israel's violations of human rights, international law and the Council's own resolutions. It has not been able to revive the process to promote the accepted two-State solution. The festering wound of Israeli occupation and atrocities in occupied Palestine is the principal source of instability, tensions and conflict in the entire Middle East. In order to bring peace and stability to the Middle East, the Palestine question — the source of the region's insecurity and its multiple conflicts — must be effectively addressed as the first and most urgent priority.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Türkiye.

Mr. Keçeli (Türkiye): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's open debate, and we welcome the briefing by the Deputy Special Coordinator.

We remain concerned about the lack of progress towards the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Equally frustrating is the lack of interest on the part of the international community to find a just, lasting and

comprehensive solution to that long-standing conflict on the United Nations agenda. The status quo in the occupied Palestinian territory is simply unsustainable. Illegal settlements, forced evictions, the use of disproportionate force against civilians, the attempts to erode the status of Jerusalem and the blockade in Gaza — all of those unilateral actions in the occupied territories curtail the fundamental rights and freedoms of Palestinians. They are in contravention of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The establishment of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, is the only viable solution to this conflict. There are no interim solutions — whether economic incentives or humanitarian assistance — that can resolve this conflict. Returning to a political path and accelerating efforts to revitalize the peace process is an urgent necessity. The members of the Middle East Quartet have a special responsibility in that regard. The international community cannot wait for a new escalation in the region to address the root causes of the conflict. The United Nations should also play the critical roles it has assumed, including as a member of the Quartet.

Millions of Palestinian refugees rely on the life-saving assistance of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). As a member of UNRWA's Advisory Commission and Chair of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA since its establishment, we were pleased to once again see strong support for UNRWA and its crucial mandate at last month's pledging conference. But the international community has a responsibility to match that strong political support with sufficient, sustained and predictable funding for the Agency. The projected funding gap of approximately \$100 million is concerning. We strongly encourage all members to fulfil their pledges, provide financial support to the Agency and redouble their efforts to enable UNRWA to effectively fulfil its mandate. For its part, my country will continue to support UNRWA's vital work, both financially and politically. That includes strong support for the General Assembly's renewal of the Agency's mandate this autumn. The continuation of UNRWA's lifeline operations is essential.

Türkiye will continue to support all efforts aimed at finding a comprehensive and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States.

Mr. Abdelaziz (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on Brazil's presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. I also want to express our appreciation to the Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process for her remarkable briefing to the Council.

We are meeting today at a time when the world is shifting its focus to our Arab region, which has recently witnessed a growing international movement. We hope that movement will attract more international attention to the main issues in our Arab region and the Palestinian question above all, including through more effective participation by the major Powers, regardless of their orientation or affiliation. The increased attention to the Middle East on the political, security and economic fronts should be reflected in the various international and multilateral forums, especially here in the Council. That will help support the consideration of Arab issues at the United Nations with the aim of achieving a lasting and comprehensive peace in our region, based on a two-State solution and the principle of land for peace, which the United Nations and the international community have adopted as a basis for reaching a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question that ensures the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, along the June 1967 borders, in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy law and the Arab Peace Initiative.

In that regard, the Council should block any attempts to transform the principle of land for peace into a principle of peace for peace. It should block Israel's attempts to defer or postpone the realization of a two-State solution and prevent the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, or to expand its circle of peace with other Arab countries without making simultaneous progress towards establishing a Palestinian State on the occupied territory. It is crucial that we build on the positive momentum of the Jeddah Security and Development Summit between the Arab countries and the United States, held in mid-July with the effective participation of the United States. The Summit emphasized the pivotal link among those countries, with the security aspect of that link connected to the work of the Council. That positive momentum should enable the Middle East Quartet to start meeting at the ministerial level without delay, with

the goal of preparing for direct negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis on the five final-status issues, particularly the issue of land, which is critical to establishing the Palestinian State and implementing a two-State solution. The other four are security, water, refugees and lastly Jerusalem, an issue that has great significance not just for the Palestinian people but for all followers of the three major monotheistic religions worldwide. East Jerusalem is and will remain the capital of the independent Palestinian State.

In parallel, the Council must take measures to ensure that the defenceless Palestinian people are protected from Israel's repeated violations of their inalienable rights throughout the occupied Palestinian territories. Grave violations, inflicted on the Palestinian people by Israeli forces and settlers, have occurred recently in Masafer Yatta, Sheikh Jarrah, Silwan and Hebron, as well as Jerusalem itself. In Jerusalem they have violated holy Islamic sites, particularly the Al-Aqsa Mosque, preventing Palestinian Muslims from visiting the sites and practicing their rites, a stark violation of their freedom of religion.

The League of Arab States welcomed the Secretary-General's recent report on children and armed conflict (S/2022/493), discussed last week in the Council (see S/PV.9096). The report mentions the very concerning cases of violations in Palestine against children due to flagrant Israeli violations. In that context, given the positive momentum of recent meetings, the Security Council should not feel it has done its job by merely listening to report after report from the Special Rapporteur on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016), while in every report that Israel is still continuing to build settlements, and as of yesterday, 25 July, Israel continues to pursue its fierce settlement policy, preventing the implementation both of a two-State solution on the ground and of the principle of land for peace.

It is now more important than ever for the Council to take decisive measures to ensure that Israel complies with the provisions of international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law and respects the Council's resolutions. The Council must adopt measures that can hold Israel accountable for all the grave violations it has perpetrated against the Palestinian people. Besides those accountability measures, the Council should lead an independent international investigation into Israel's assassination of the martyred Palestinian journalists Shireen Abu Akleh

and Ghufuran Harun Hamid Warasneh, whose murders are a flagrant violation of freedom of opinion and the press and of the most basic human rights of defenceless journalists, simply because they are reporting on the practices of the Israeli army and the settlers who are violating the rights of the Palestinian people.

The Council must also address Israel's systematic violations of the rights of young Palestinians, which are preventing them from achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and from establishing and fulfilling their political, economic and social aspirations. An entire generation of Palestinians is being wiped out under occupation, giving them no hope for the future.

On several occasions, President Mahmoud Abbas has proposed an initiative to the Council and the General Assembly to convene an international conference under the aegis of the Secretary-General for the purpose of holding direct and serious negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides under the auspices and supervision of the international Quartet. The League of Arab States strongly supports that initiative. We call on the Council to take advantage right away of the recent positive momentum created in Jeddah and the unique support of the Arab-United States summit for the Palestinian question in order to convene a conference as soon as possible, in the particular hope that the remaining members of the international Quartet agree on the importance of convening a meeting at the ministerial level to start the preparations immediately for holding such a conference.

At the same time, the international community needs to give further importance to effectively addressing the deteriorating economic situation of the Palestinian people, especially given the continuing negative repercussions of the coronavirus disease pandemic and the worsening food and energy crises, in addition to the global financial crisis. The League of Arab States appreciates the valuable financial support provided to the Palestinian Authority to help it address that devastating economic crisis.

We also appreciate the initiative of the President of the General Assembly to convene a high-level meeting in support of the efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in order to enable it to perform its pivotal tasks in dealing with the growing needs of Palestinian refugees, who are also suffering from the repercussions of those crises. We would also like to

thank all the countries that have made financial pledges to help the Agency overcome its current funding crisis. The League of Arab States also stresses that renewing UNRWA's mandate during the Assembly's seventy-seventh session is crucial.

In conclusion, the Palestinian question has suffered in the past from unfair and irresponsible decisions. In recent times, the question has been deliberately neglected for no reason and has fallen victim to the conflicts between super-Powers. However, the League of Arab States insists that we restore the Middle East peace process in its entirety. We need to use the hope and positive momentum we have achieved recently to overcome all the obstacles in the way of the realization of the peace desired. The League of Arab States looks forward to working hand in hand with the Security Council in the near future to achieve that goal.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Pérez Ayestarán (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the convening of today's quarterly open debate on a topic to which we attach special importance based on our long-standing, principled position and firm support for the just cause of the heroic Palestinian people. We would also like to thank the Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process for her briefing.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Unfortunately, since we last met in this Chamber to address this issue (see S/PV.9021), the situation on the ground has not improved. Quite the contrary, it continues to deteriorate day by day, while the suffering of the noble Palestinian people, victims of violent attacks by Israel's occupying forces, including acts of terror perpetrated by extremist settler militias, continues to drag on and on.

A clear example of that is the situation in the Gaza Strip — the world's largest prison — which has been subject to a cruel blockade for more than 15 years, resulting in a dire humanitarian situation and deplorable socioeconomic conditions for more than 2 million Palestinians that continue to deteriorate daily. We therefore insist that that deliberate policy, which seeks not only to inflict pain and suffering on the Palestinian civilian population but also to fragment

the Palestinian territories and destroy the viability of establishing two States on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, is jeopardizing the possibility of achieving a just and lasting peace in that region.

On 7 June, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, published its first report, concluding, among other things, that ending the Israeli occupation, including the illegal settlement policy, as well as the discrimination against Palestinians, is fundamental to stopping the conflict and the persistent cycle of violence, and that the prevailing culture of impunity fuels resentment and tensions on the ground, which in turn increases instability and prolongs the conflict.

Worse still, the report notes that, faced with what it calls "an occupation in perpetuity", the occupying Power "has no intention of ending the occupation" and that on the contrary, it is pursuing "clear policies for ensuring complete control over the occupied Palestinian territory, and is acting to alter the demography through the maintenance of a repressive environment for Palestinians and a favourable environment for Israeli settlers" (A/HRC/50/21, para. 70).

That is not a new conclusion, but rather a confirmation of what we have been denouncing for years — that the lack of accountability is being leveraged by the occupying Power to continue its brutal aggression against Palestine; pursue its policies of colonial occupation and apartheid, violence and collective punishment against Palestinian civilians; advance its illegal expansion and construction of new settlements; continue arresting and detaining innocent Palestinians arbitrarily; pursue its policy of evictions and demolition of homes, including in Sheikh Jarrah, Silwan and Massafer Yatta, and the expropriation of Palestinian land; and continue perpetrating crimes against humanity and war crimes against the Palestinian people.

In that regard, it is clear that the Government of one of the permanent members of the Security Council has been perpetuating that context of international impunity over time, serving only to support Israel's routine criminal practices and policies, with total impunity. However, we welcome, as an important first step towards accountability, the potential inclusion of the United States partner, Israel, on the list of perpetrators of violations against children, in the event that there

are no noticeable improvements and the indiscriminate attacks against that vulnerable group continue.

We want to know how much more time must pass before the Council demands that Israel put an end to its continued aggression against Palestine? How many more Palestinian lives must be lost before the Council holds Israel accountable for its crimes once and for all? How much more time must pass before justice is served and the prevailing cycle of impunity is ended? How much longer will it take for the Council to hold Israel accountable for its crimes, implement the relevant resolutions and demand that Israel stop its continued aggression against Palestine or agree to provide international protection for the Palestinian people?

For our part, we in Venezuela can only continue to insist that this organ, in line with the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations, not only play a constructive role in the peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including by fostering an environment conducive to the resumption of a necessary political dialogue and credible, serious and direct negotiations to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace based on the two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security, but also to move forward by taking concrete measures to ensure, without further delay, the accountability of Israel, the occupying Power, before international justice.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our unwavering position in support of the defence of the independence and inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to realize their legitimate national aspirations. We renew our commitment to continue working towards the achievement of a free, independent and sovereign State of Palestine, within the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital and as a full Member of our Organization. The Council must stop depriving the heroic Palestinian people of peace, justice and freedom.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Gala López (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We support the statements to be delivered by the representatives of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Indonesia, in its capacity as Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Cuba maintains its long-standing and unwavering position in defence of and solidarity with the just cause of the Palestinian people. The most recent report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 states that Israel is practicing apartheid in the occupied Palestinian territories. We note with deep concern the increasing tensions and human rights violations in those territories, including East Jerusalem. The violence against Palestinian civilians continues, and it includes arrests, detentions, imprisonment and killings, including of children. Israel is ramping up its illegal annexation policy and expanding its colonization practices. Homes and properties continue to be destroyed and more Palestinian families are being forcibly displaced as a result of the continued construction and expansion of Israeli settlements. The blockade of the Gaza Strip continues, as do the plans to annex the Palestinian territories in the Jordan Valley and other parts of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Despite long-standing requests from the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and other international actors, the Security Council has still failed to act to put an end to Israel's military aggression and occupation of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. There can be no justification for continuing to prevent the Palestinian people from exercising their right to self-determination and to an independent and sovereign State within the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and with the right of return of refugees also guaranteed.

The United States, which has repeatedly obstructed Council action and prevented it from fulfilling its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security, continues to obstruct a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while enabling Israel's impunity. Other unilateral and unwarranted decisions by the United States Government, which the current Administration has not reversed, further undermine the possibility of a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, continue to severely harm the legitimate interests of the Arab nations and maintain the latent danger of an escalation in the region.

We condemn the unilateral decision of the Government of the United States to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and establish its

diplomatic representation in that city, disrespecting its historical status, as well as its decision to recognize the sovereignty of Israel over the Syrian Golan, both of which constitute serious violations of the Charter, international law and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. We reiterate our rejection of the so-called deal of the century, which ignores the concept of a two-State solution and threatens the future of the State of Palestine within its pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. We demand an immediate and unconditional end to the United States' arbitrary and illegal unilateral coercive measures imposed on sovereign nations in the Middle East.

We reiterate our demand for Israel's full and unconditional withdrawal from the Syrian Golan and all the occupied Arab territories. We call for an end to external interference in Syria and full respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity. We also support finding a peaceful and negotiated solution to the situation imposed on that sister Arab nation. We reiterate our support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran and for the inalienable right of States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We reiterate our rejection of the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA and its reimposition of unilateral sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran, which are contrary to international law and the Charter. We affirm our unreserved support for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We will continue to strongly support the accession of the State of Palestine to full membership in the United Nations. We support President Abbas's call for the holding of an international peace conference. As the Commander-in-Chief of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, said at the Non-Aligned Movement's sixth summit conference in 1979,

“[N]o more brutal dispossession of the right of a people to peace and existence has been committed in this century (...) Stripped of their lands, expelled from their own homeland, dispersed throughout the world, persecuted and murdered, the heroic Palestinians constitute an impressive example of abnegation and patriotism and are the living symbol of the greatest crime of our time”.

It is unacceptable that such a heart-wrenching reality has extended into the twenty-first century.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Othman (Malaysia): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's open debate.

Malaysia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and I would like to add several points in my national capacity.

We have repeatedly heard expressions of support by the international community, including the Security Council, for a two-State solution. Yet the Palestinians' right to full membership status in our Organization has been denied, and that is coupled with a lack of progress towards realizing a two-State solution. We have also heard today that Palestinians' human dignity continues to be violated in every sense with impunity. Israel continues to practice extrajudicial killings, the torture and killing of children, collective punishment and attacks on human rights defenders and the press, in addition to its illegal settlements, home demolitions and evictions.

A culture that enables impunity for human rights violations cannot advocate for respect for human rights, the rules-based order and the Charter of the United Nations while at the same time ignoring the atrocities perpetrated against the Palestinians. It is abundantly clear that Israel's systematic oppression and discriminatory policies against the Palestinian people are tantamount to the crime of apartheid, something that has been confirmed in the March report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 and by various international human rights organizations. All conflicts must be resolved peacefully and in accordance with the Charter and international law. The Council in particular is obligated to maintain international peace and security, yet we see that it has not accorded the same strength of attention and action to Palestine's decades-long struggle in resisting Israel's foreign occupation.

We urge the Security Council, especially the Middle East Quartet, to galvanize efforts and create the conditions necessary for peace talks with the relevant parties. The inaction of the Security Council in urgently addressing the conflict will only further embolden the oppressor. It is high time for accountability. We also call on all Member States to respect and implement the relevant United Nations resolutions to ensure that Israel is accountable for its crimes and human rights violations.

Malaysia remains committed to supporting the Palestinian people in realizing their inalienable rights to self-determination and independence. Our position is clear: only a negotiated political settlement involving a two-State solution can create sustainable peace based on internationally agreed parameters, international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. We will also continue to provide financial support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

The credibility of the Safety Council rests upon its collective ability to address all conflicts, including the existence of threats to peace or acts of aggression.

Let me conclude by reiterating the urgent need for the Security Council to end the foreign occupation by Israel and to work towards a peaceful solution to the conflict.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Alateek (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to sincerely thank the delegation of Brazil for having convened this important debate.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia remains committed to the constant principles of the Palestinian question, namely, ending the occupation, the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital and guaranteeing the right of return for Palestinian refugees.

The Kingdom reiterates the fact that it stands with the Palestinian people. We emphasize the importance of achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East as a strategic choice to end one of the longest and most complicated historical conflicts witnessed by our contemporary world. That peace should be based on the two-State solution and in line with the international terms of reference as well as the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, which guarantees the establishment of a Palestinian State along the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital; the return of refugees; and an end to Israel's occupation of all Arab territories, including the Syrian Arab Golan and Lebanese territories.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stresses that its consistent and firm position vis-à-vis the Palestinian question and the Palestinian people will not change even if we allow international flights to cross our airspace. We reaffirm that the decision to allow the

use of our airspace by all airlines is in line with our international obligations. That step will not be a prelude to other steps.

The international community and the Security Council must shoulder their responsibilities to support the Palestinian people and the Palestinian question by ensuring that justice prevails through the realization of the aspirations of the Palestinian people to establish an independent State in line with international resolutions and by resolutely addressing all ongoing Israeli practices and violations of international law and of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Armed conflicts and disputes as well as pandemics have had an adverse impact on the entire world, especially the Middle East, which is a vulnerable geographical region that has always suffered from disputes and instability. The Kingdom believes in the importance of strengthening regional and international cooperation to respond to those common and emerging challenges confronting the region and the world. We also support the creation of favourable conditions so that the region can enjoy peace and prosperity while maintaining Arab harmony. The Kingdom therefore hosted the Jeddah Security and Development Summit on 16 July, with the participation of a number of Heads of State from the region. The outcomes of the Summit were welcomed at the regional and international levels.

We would like to highlight the following three points.

We reaffirm my country's steadfast position in support of a solution that guarantees the security and stability of the Republic of Yemen and meets the aspirations of the brotherly Yemeni people. We also value the efforts of the Special Envoy, Mr. Hans Grundberg, to strengthen the commitment to the current truce, sponsored by the United Nations, and his efforts to extend that truce in line with the initiative of the Kingdom announced in March 2021 to end the crisis in Yemen and to reach a comprehensive political solution. The Houthi militias must abide by the truce and stop exploiting the suffering of Yemeni civilians. They must open humanitarian corridors in Taiz.

We also stress the importance of keeping the Arab Gulf region as a region free of weapons of mass destruction, and we reaffirm the importance of cooperating with the International Atomic Energy Agency in that regard. We also reaffirm the importance of strengthening regional and international efforts

to combat terrorism and extremism. We also need to prevent the funding, arming and recruiting terrorist groups by certain countries in the region, and we must address all activities threatening the security and stability of the region.

My country also expresses our condemnation and denunciation of the attack against Dohuk governorate, in the northern part of the sisterly Republic of Iraq. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will stand with the Government and the brotherly people of Iraq in confronting the challenges threatening its security and territorial integrity.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia remains committed to the unity and territorial integrity of Arab territories and the welfare of their peoples. We support all the efforts of the United Nations to that end and hope that the international community in general and the Security Council in particular will carry out their roles in that regard.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Mabhongo (South Africa): The Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to be the subject of many meetings in this Chamber owing to its impact on security and stability in the Middle East and the whole world. It is therefore disconcerting that despite what appears to be a deteriorating security situation, there has been virtually no meaningful action from the Security Council to resolve that protracted conflict.

The Security Council's inability to act against Israel despite its willingness to act decisively on other issues on its agenda illustrates the persistent double standards and inconsistency in its work. That perpetuates the Council's failure to hold the occupier accountable for its violations of international law and its own resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016).

South Africa is deeply concerned about the escalation in settler violence against Palestinians in the occupied territories and the continual advancement of illegal Israeli settlement activities. The persistent threat to Palestinian's livelihoods through forced evictions and demolitions leads to heightened tensions, sparking a cycle of violence and perpetuating insecurity and instability.

Moreover, Israel's imposition of an apartheid system, detailed in several reports by international as well as Israeli and Palestinian human rights

organizations, manifested through stringent policies that deprive the Palestinian people of their freedom, dignity and rights, debilitates any prospect of the establishment of an independent Palestinian State. The hostile environment created by the occupying Power does not encourage an atmosphere of constructive dialogue and peace. Recently, the South African Council of Churches visited the occupied territories and reaffirmed the existence of the apartheid conditions that the Palestinians are subjected to.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms in its article 1 that

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights".

However, that is not true for the Palestinians. Deep inequalities divide Palestinians and Israelis across the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel. Discrimination by law is in breach of the provisions laid out in the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid.

The Secretary-General's report on children in armed conflict (S/2022/493) sheds light on the inequalities perpetuated by the occupying State on Palestinian children. The report states that there has been an alarming increase in grave violations against children, particularly a significant increase in the killing and maiming of children in the occupied Palestinian territory by Israeli forces during hostilities, air strikes on densely populated areas and the use of live ammunition during law enforcement operations. We are disheartened at the high number of verified grave violations against Palestinian children. Accountability for those violations must be ensured so that they do not continue. In that regard, South Africa concurs with the Secretary-General's proposal that action must be taken to include Israel and other groups as listed parties should they not put in place measures to prevent violations and improve the protection of children.

On 12 August the international community will celebrate International Youth Day under the theme "Intergenerational Solidarity: Creating a World for All Ages". The day was designated by the General Assembly to acknowledge youth as key partners in bringing about change and raising awareness of the challenges they face around the world. Palestinian youth face many challenges affecting their economic and social well-being owing to their painful reality of violence, discrimination and oppression at the hands

of their occupier. In that regard, their future remains grim, as they are robbed of realizing their hopes and aspirations. The international community cannot stand by idly and deny the youth of Palestine their right to a prosperous future. As the States Members of the United Nations, we are obligated to call for justice and accountability as a precursor to a lasting peace.

South Africa therefore remains of the view that it is pivotal that we revitalize international action and seek to find new solutions within the international system in order to address the challenges facing the Palestinian people. We must intensify the call for international action, with the United Nations playing a leading role to find a solution premised on a just, rights-based settlement with fair laws. As the international community, we must seek a solution that facilitates equality and equity for all who have the right to live in the territories of Israel and Palestine, without which security, dignity and prosperity will, unfortunately, not be achieved.

The President: I now give the floor to the Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Mr. Nasir: On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I congratulate Brazil for its capable presidency of the Security Council in July. I also thank Deputy Special Coordinator Hastings for her briefing.

Israel's continued settlement expansion and land confiscation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, has grave political repercussions. They constitute grave breaches of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions and undermine the contiguity and viability of the Palestinian State and the prospects for realizing the two-State solution on the pre-1967 borders that the Security Council, the General Assembly and the international community, as a whole, have long endorsed and called for.

The Committee expresses its concern over the ongoing developments in Masafer Yatta, in the south of the occupied West Bank, after the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that the area is to be appropriated by the Israeli military. That action risks forcibly displacing more than 1,200 Palestinians, including a large number of women and at least 580 children, the largest forcible expulsion of Palestinians since 1967. As referenced by the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator

for the Middle East Peace Process and as reported in the 15 July 2022 end-of-mission statement by the United Nations Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, the implementation of that decision will test the international community's resolve and the Security Council's ability to take decisive action to uphold international law and the Charter of the United Nations and to protect Palestinian civilians living under occupation, as well as their homes and livelihoods.

The Committee calls on the Security Council to clearly and firmly reiterate its demands that the Government of Israel, the occupying Power, immediately end all settlement expansions, demolitions, confiscations of Palestinian property and forcible removals of civilians, in compliance with international law and United Nations resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016).

The Committee is alarmed by the increasing violence and casualties in recent months in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, as reported by Special Coordinator Wennesland. We condemn the indiscriminate killing and excessive use of lethal force against civilians, particularly children, which have become all too frequent and for which no one is being held accountable. The protection of civilians is central to the work of the United Nations and the Security Council and must be a prioritized in the absence of a just solution.

Recent findings in the Secretary-General's report on children in armed conflict (S/2022/493) highlighted the dramatic increase in grave violations inflicted on Palestinian children. Those findings must serve as a stark reminder to the Security Council to act. The Committee urges Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law and to take measures to protect Palestinian children caught up in the midst of this ongoing tragic conflict.

We applaud and join the multiple calls for action to also protect human rights defenders and the freedom of the press. The Committee welcomes the United Nations Human Rights Office's preliminary investigation regarding the killing of journalist Shireen Abu Akleh and urges Israel to bring those responsible to justice. The Committee also commends the nine

member States of the European Union that, in the absence of any substantial information to support Israel's allegations, have pledged to continue working with the six Palestinian civil society groups that Israel labelled terrorist organizations in October 2021. Those organizations, some of which are Committee partners, play a crucial role in promoting democracy and building a robust Palestinian civil society and must continue to be supported.

Through its multifaceted work, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) plays a crucial role in providing essential services to the Palestinian people. The Committee lauds the commitments made by Member States at the recent United Nations pledging conference and joins the Secretary-General in urging Member States to put the Agency on a sustainable financial footing. By contributing to UNRWA, we contribute to the welfare and dignity of Palestine refugees and to Middle East peace and stability.

We commend the June 2022 findings of the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and in Israel. We concur with the assessment that the continued Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory and all its facets, including annexation, the Gaza blockade and policies based on discrimination and segregation, are the primary root causes of the recurrent tension, instability and conflict in the region. The Committee pledges to continue its advocacy with Member States and United Nations officials towards resuming negotiations aimed at addressing those root causes, resolving the core issues and achieving a just and lasting peace. Only a comprehensive political process addressing the unfulfilled promises to the Palestinian people and leading to the realization of their inalienable rights, including to self-determination and return, will result in an end of the conflict.

In line with its mandate, the Committee will continue its advocacy work, organize public events and draw attention to the plight of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights, including in relation to East Jerusalem.

The only way to resolve the question of Palestine is through a two-State solution based on the 1967 borders and with two States — Israel and Palestine — living side by side in peace and security, with Jerusalem as the

capital of the State of Palestine. We urge the Security Council to act without delay in order to contribute to the achievement of that solution.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Caccia: The Holy See would like to thank the Brazilian presidency for convening an open debate on this important topic.

Over half a decade since the adoption of resolution 2334 (2016), we remain no closer to the achievement of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State or to the realization of the right of Israelis to security within the internationally recognized pre-1967 borders. That lack of progress is compounded by the fact that, according to the Secretary-General's most recent report (S/2022/504), the situation features the highest number of settlement units advanced since October 2020, an increase in daily violence throughout the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel and the deadliest terrorist attacks in years. In that regard, the Holy See renews the expression of its deepest regret at the deaths of the civilians killed during those attacks.

Concerning the death of Ms. Shireen Abu Akleh, a Catholic journalist, who was shot and killed in the exercise of her profession in Jenin on 11 May, the Holy See expresses its concern and deepest sorrow, as already communicated to the Israeli and Palestinian authorities. Regarding the events that occurred at the Catholic Saint Joseph Hospital in Jerusalem before her funeral, my delegation cannot but condemn the behaviour of the Israeli police.

Furthermore, the war in Ukraine has threatened the food security of Palestinian families, as well as other civilians throughout the wider region. In the light of increased costs due to rising food prices, my delegation encourages all States to consider additional contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

The Holy See also notes with concern the heightened tensions around the holy places in Jerusalem. Those sites form an important spiritual and cultural heritage for the whole of humankind. In his Easter message this year, Pope Francis expressed the hope that Israelis, Palestinians and all who dwell in the holy city, together with pilgrims, experience the beauty of peace, dwell in fraternity and enjoy free access to the holy places in mutual respect for the rights of each.

In that regard, my delegation reaffirms its appeal for all parties to maintain the historic status quo within Jerusalem, the city of peace, and rejects any unilateral measures aimed at changing it, including attempts to alter the multicultural and multireligious character of the holy city, which is dear to Jews, Christians and Muslims alike.

In the face of Palestine's many challenges, the Holy See reiterates the need for all parties to respect international law, refrain from inflammatory rhetoric and reject all forms of violence. Such commitments are vital to the fostering of genuine encounter, dialogue and accompaniment on the path to peace. It is only along such a path that a lasting two-State solution can be realized. My delegation urges political leaders on all sides to demonstrate the requisite will to nurture the trust necessary for resuming final-status negotiations.

Allow me to offer a few words on the situation in the wider Middle East. The Holy See welcomes the six-month renewal of the Syrian cross-border mechanism, although a longer extension to allow aid organizations to better plan deliveries would have been preferred. Given the immense humanitarian needs of the Syrian people, which are at their highest level since the war began, the cross-border mechanism should remain in place until the situation improves and cross-line deliveries can adequately address the country's humanitarian challenges.

Turning to Yemen, my delegation welcomes the extension and consolidation of the current truce. It is the hope of the Holy See that the ceasefire can pave the way towards lasting peace, facilitate the distribution of aid and contribute to early recovery efforts.

In both Syria and Yemen, my delegation notes with concern the issue of overcompliance with sanctions, in which banks place burdensome requirements on aid organizations or even refuse to do business with them altogether out of fear of punishment despite the existence of humanitarian exemptions. To tackle that issue, the Holy See encourages all States implementing sanctions to provide precise guidance on permitted activities to financial institutions so that the flow of humanitarian assistance is not impeded. In that regard, my delegation would like to recall the words of the Holy Father, who has insisted that the imposition of sanctions should not strike directly at everyday life in order to provide a glimmer of hope to the general populace, increasingly caught in the grip of poverty.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kuwait.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you and your delegation, Mr. President, on Brazil's successful management of the work of the Security Council in the month of July, and we wish you all the best for the remaining meetings of this month. We would also like to thank Ms. Lynn Hastings, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for her briefing, and we reiterate our support for her and for all efforts to restore calm and stability in the region.

Since our last open debate, on 24 April (see S/PV.9021), under the agenda item "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question", the international community has followed with great concern the grave escalation in the occupied Palestinian territory as a result of the systematic crimes and aggression committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people. We have seen that the Al-Aqsa Mosque is still subject to repeated violations, whether by the Israeli occupying forces or settlers, the latest of which was yesterday. We reiterate our strong condemnation and denunciation of those hostile practices, which constitute a provocation to the feelings of Muslims throughout the world and an explicit threat to the freedom of worship in the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Those hostile practices are also part of a series of flagrant violations against all international conventions and resolutions, as well as a driver of the destruction of stability in the region and a source for fuelling hate, extremism and violence.

The aggression and crimes committed by the Israeli occupying forces are among a series of such crimes and violations committed by Israel, the occupying Power, of the relevant resolutions 476 (1980), 478 (1980) and 2334 (2016), which all emphasize the importance of not undermining the special status of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and invalidate any measure aimed at changing its demographic character. The occupying Power must respect the historical and legal status quo at Al-Haram Al-Sharif. We therefore reiterate our call on the international community, and in particular the Security Council, to play its role in ensuring that the Israeli occupying forces be held fully responsible for the repercussions of those crimes and the illegal and provocative practices in Jerusalem and Al-Haram Al-Sharif and violations against the unarmed Palestinian people and their land and holy sites. It is important to

work jointly together to strengthen international efforts to restore comprehensive calm and focus on reviving the peace process in the Middle East.

The Israeli policies and practices confirm once again that Israel seeks to entrench the occupation, as well as its unwillingness to reach a comprehensive and just peace agreement. That was affirmed by the recent report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, which clearly noted that Israel has no intention to end the occupation and that it has clear policies to ensure its control of the occupied Palestinian territory and to work to alter the demographic composition therein. There is also an increase in the number of settlement activities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, which has led to many Palestinian families being displaced after being dispossessed of their property and having their homes demolished, without any accountability for the perpetrators of those crimes.

Whenever and wherever they occur, impunity and the lack of accountability will inevitably expand the cycle of violence, prolong the conflict and reduce opportunities to achieve sustainable peace and security, which is directly demonstrated in the occupied Palestinian territories, whose people suffer from daily crimes that require the international community to make the perpetrators of those crimes and violations accountable.

In that regard, Israel must also uphold its international obligations. We reaffirm our strong condemnation of the heinous assassination of journalist Shireen Abu Akleh by the Israeli occupation forces in a Jenin camp last May, while she was doing her job and covering the crimes committed against the Palestinian people. We stress the need for an immediate international, independent and transparent investigation of that crime to ensure that those responsible are identified and brought to justice.

In conclusion, the State of Kuwait reaffirms its full support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), as we believe in the vital role it plays in mitigating the suffering of Palestine refugees in its five working zones. We urge the international community to continue supporting UNRWA in order to ensure that it continues to provide health, educational and relief services.

We reiterate our support for the Arab, Islamic and international position, which underscores that peace is a strategic choice and that a lasting, comprehensive and just settlement is based on the two-State solution pursuant to the agreed parameters — relevant Security Council resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative — so that the Palestinian people can fully enjoy all their legitimate political rights in their own independent State, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Mr. Al-Maawda (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I congratulate you, Mr. President, on presiding over the Security Council this month. We express our appreciation to Ms. Hastings, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for her valuable briefing this morning.

The Middle East is suffering from dangerous crises that require the attention of the United Nations. There are decades-long and emerging challenges, such as the coronavirus disease pandemic, food insecurity and other economic, social and environmental challenges, which the international community must seriously address in order to find lasting and radical solutions to end the conflicts, including the atrocities and the suffering of millions of innocent people in the region.

The State of Qatar continues to make tireless efforts to resolve the crises in the region and reduce their impact on civilians affected by armed conflict by providing needed humanitarian assistance and supporting the efforts of the United Nations.

Although there are many crises in the Middle East, the Palestinian question has remained the central and longest-standing issue before the Council for more than seven decades. Therefore, the Council must shoulder its responsibility for that issue and reach a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement, based on the two-State solution, in order to establish an independent, viable Palestinian State within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

The Israeli occupation of Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan and territories in Lebanon, must end. There must also be an immediate and full cessation of settlement activities, the return of refugees and the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination.

It is undeniable that the city of Jerusalem has a special status given its significance as home to the holy sites, particularly the sacred Al-Aqsa Mosque. We therefore once again strongly condemn all attempts to raid Al-Haram Al-Sharif, attacks against its unarmed worshippers and their arrest, which hinders them from practicing their religious rites. Jeopardizing the historic and legal status of Islamic and Christian holy sites in occupied East Jerusalem and attempts to Judaize them and divide the Al-Aqsa Mosque spatially and temporally, while undermining Muslims' freedom of worship therein, are illegitimate practices, as they contravene international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

Israel, the occupying Power, continues its repressive policies against Palestinians by annexing and seizing their land through the use of overwhelming violence and arbitrary arrests. The most recent example of such practices was the assassination of Palestinian *Al-Jazeera* journalist and television correspondent Shireen Abu Akleh as she was carrying out her work in a vest that clearly identified her as a member of the press. The State of Qatar has condemned that crime in the strongest terms as a blatant violation and flagrant aggression against the freedom of the press and the right of people to access information. We echo the call of Council members for an immediate, comprehensive, transparent and impartial investigation in order to ensure accountability.

It is high time for the international community to shoulder its responsibilities with regard to protecting the Palestinian people, safeguarding the holy sites and ending all flagrant violations against them, while guaranteeing the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2334 (2016), including by ending the occupation and illegal settlements.

We reiterate the solidarity of the State of Qatar with our Palestinian brethren by providing the necessary humanitarian support and assistance in order to improve the living situation of Palestinians, especially in the Gaza Strip, which suffers from the destructive impact of the military escalation and the continued unjust blockade. We have funded the construction of hundreds of residential units and provided basic construction material, fuel, electricity and cash assistance.

Since the State of Qatar appreciates the indispensable role of the United Nations Relief and

Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in supporting the refugees until a just solution for them is reached, we have provided financial support for its core resources. Our most recent contribution totalled \$18 million for 2021 and 2022.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar reaffirms the need for all parties to uphold their obligations under resolutions of international legitimacy, the Charter of the United Nations and international law. We reiterate our commitment to collectively work with our partners in the international system to overcome shared challenges in support of the Security Council's mandate to maintain international peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Koba (Indonesia): Within the framework of this quarterly meeting to address the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, I would like to draw the Security Council's attention to the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the situation in East Jerusalem, which is worsening on a daily basis.

The continuing occupation of the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, the 15-year blockade of Gaza and long-standing discrimination are the reality that Palestinians continually face. Israel's occupation is a grave breach of international law, including resolution 2334 (2016), which explicitly calls for immediate steps to prevent all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror. Israel needs to end its illegal occupation immediately. Indonesia urges the Council to take decisive action and immediately put in place accountability measures to ensure that Israel ends its occupation and reverses its policies, including the building of settlements, the siege of the Gaza Strip and the forced transfers of the Palestinian population in Jerusalem, Masafer Yatta, the Jordan Valley and other areas. Indonesia also welcomes the collective action and efforts of the United Nations Human Rights Office to conduct a preliminary investigation into the killing of the journalist Shireen Abu Akleh and urges Israel to bring those responsible to justice.

A few days ago, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People convened a virtual conference focused on Palestinian youth in East Jerusalem under occupation, issues of identity and resilience in East Jerusalem and empowering young people to promote change. However,

at the moment there can be neither change nor a future for Palestinian children, who often bear the brunt of the costs of ongoing conflict, including indiscriminate killing and the excessive use of lethal force against civilians. The Security Council should prioritize and address the issue of the protection of civilians as a matter of vital importance, since the ongoing violent acts constitute grave violations of international law, including humanitarian law and human rights law, and of numerous relevant resolutions.

As a long-standing supporter of the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Indonesia believes in the crucial role of the Agency's ongoing services, including in the areas of education, health and social protection for Palestinian refugees. As the Agency has continued to experience a shortage of the funds it needs to carry out its humanitarian work in this calendar year, it is important that Member States work to strengthen their political and financial commitment in support of UNRWA's work. Indonesia also supports the renewal of the Agency's mandate and deplores any deliberate attempts to delegitimize its work.

It is essential that immediate steps be taken to lower the tensions that undermine the prospects for peaceful solutions between the two States. That is not enough, however, and it never will be. The only way to end Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian land and oppression of the Palestinian people, and to achieve just and lasting peace, leading to the realization of the self-determination and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, is a committed and comprehensive political process. It is our responsibility to keep shining a light on the ongoing efforts to realize the international consensus based on the existence of two States, Israel and the State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within internationally recognized borders, a goal that we have all long sought.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Hossain (Bangladesh): I commend the leadership of Brazil in steering the work of the Council this month. I also thank the presidency for convening today's important debate and the briefers for their insights.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement to be made by the representative of Azerbaijan on behalf of

the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and I would like to add a few points in my national capacity.

The year 2021, which saw the deaths of at least 324 Palestinians, including 86 children, was the deadliest for Palestinians since 2014. The intensity of the military atrocities, detentions and arrests, attacks by settlers, demolitions of homes and civilian infrastructure and general terror leading to injuries to innocent people, the destruction of property and so on has been further aggravated by the Israeli occupying forces in the first half of 2022. Moreover, we continue to observe the Israelis' expansion of illegal settlements and the growing numbers of attacks by armed settlers, with the help of the Israeli security forces.

It is a matter of serious concern that the Israeli settlers have continued to violate the historic and legal status quo of Al-Haram Al-Sharif, while terrorizing and harassing Palestinian children and setting fire to Palestinian villages. We are also deeply concerned about their further encroachment on Palestinian land and their extraction of natural resources, restricting the free movement of the Palestinian population and cutting off their access to grazing lands that have long been used by Palestinian pastoralists, as mentioned in the Secretary-General's recent report (S/2022/504). In addition to the attacks on civilians, such illegal actions create serious obstacles to economic activity and lead ultimately to a deterioration in the humanitarian situation. We would like to point to the recent report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, which mentions that Israel has no intention of ending the occupation and has clear policies aimed at ensuring its complete control over the occupied Palestinian territory. The report also noted the views expressed by the former Secretary-General that a sense of despair and frustration was growing under the weight of half a century of occupation and paralysis of the peace process.

Bangladesh reiterates its position in support of the Palestinian people's just cause of an independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, under the two-State solution, based on the pre-1967 borders. In that regard, we would like to highlight the following points.

First, the Security Council must demand an end to all of Israel's provocations and violations. It must demand the implementation of the relevant United

Nations resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), and ensure Israel's compliance with international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Secondly, it is time for concrete action by the international community aimed at holding Israel accountable for grave injustices and violence against the people of Palestine and for repeated violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law in the occupied territory. The offences committed against the Palestinians are tantamount to war crimes. We also echo the continued calls of the international community for an independent international investigation into the murder of the journalist Shireen Abu Akleh by Israeli occupying forces.

Thirdly, the High Commissioner for Human Rights has pointed out that children are the worst affected in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Secretary-General's recent report on children and armed conflict (S/2022/493) also highlighted how brutally the Israeli occupying forces treat children in the occupied territory. There can be no moral or legal justification for the killing of innocent children. We call for consistent and urgent action to protect all civilian lives, particularly children.

Before concluding, I would like to reiterate Bangladesh's unwavering and steadfast support for the inalienable rights of our Palestinian brothers and sisters and for a just and lasting solution to their legitimate aspirations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bahrain.

Mr. Hatem (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, it is my pleasure, Mr. President, to thank the delegation of Brazil for its efforts at the helm of the Security Council this month, which we very much appreciate. I also thank Brazil for convening today's important open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, and Ms. Lynn Hastings, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for her valuable briefing.

The Middle East, a region that is of great international strategic importance, has been suffering for years from a difficult political, security and economic situation, as well as extremely dangerous challenges that threaten to undermine regional stability and international peace and security as well as global

interests. The situation demands that the international community demonstrate solidarity and coordination and make effective collective efforts to find solutions to the region's current crises and conflicts and achieve peace, prosperity and sustainable development in the interests of the peoples of the region and the entire world.

In that context, the important Jeddah Security and Development Summit was held in our sister Kingdom of Saudi Arabia this month. It promoted collective efforts, addressed joint challenges and sought to achieve security, peace and prosperity with the participation of the leaders of the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The participants also included King Abdullah II of Jordan, President Al Sisi of Egypt, Mr. Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, Prime Minister of Iraq, and President Biden of the United States.

His Majesty Hamad Bin Issa Al Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, addressed the Summit and presented his wise vision, reiterating his unwavering commitment to laying the foundations for constructive cooperation and peaceful coexistence in order to counter the challenges and threats in the Middle East and the world. His Majesty emphasized the need to demonstrate balanced and profound reflection about how we can resolve the conflicts and crises in the region and tackle the political, security and economic situation, including the difficult challenges in the Middle East.

The Palestinian question requires a just settlement through the establishment of an independent Palestinian State pursuant to the two-State solution and the Arab Peace Initiative, in addition to the creation of promising economic and sustainable opportunities for the brotherly Palestinian people and their effective participation in the development process.

His Majesty also recalled the conclusions of the workshop on the theme "Peace for prosperity", which was held in the Kingdom of Bahrain in 2019, and reiterated the importance of achieving a political solution to the crisis in Yemen, as well as the delivery of humanitarian and development assistance to the Yemeni people.

My country reiterates the importance of joining efforts and ceasing interference in the internal affairs of States, while safeguarding the principles and rights set forth under international law and respecting the sovereignty and religious and cultural values of States, in addition to respecting others, tolerance and peaceful

coexistence. Moreover, we must work together to rid the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction and fight against extremism and terrorism, while protecting international navigation and the security of oil delivery and global trade.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain reiterates its commitment as an effective partner to establish security and stability at the regional and international levels, while making international efforts to address all political, security, economic and environmental challenges with a view to meeting the aspirations of the peoples of the region and the entire world for achieving peace, development and prosperity.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan.

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

At the outset, I congratulate Brazil on its presidency of the Security Council this month and express the Movement's appreciation for the opportunity to present its position on the question of Palestine.

During the July 2021 NAM mid-term ministerial conference, 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 Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, must remain a priority on the Movement's agenda. The issue also constitutes an ongoing responsibility of the United Nations until it is satisfactorily resolved in all its aspects, in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions.

In that regard, the members of the Movement once again reaffirm that this ongoing historic injustice, with the nearly 55-year Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and other Arab territories at its core, continues to pose a serious threat to regional and international peace and security. As an entire people — the Palestinian people — continue to be deprived of their inalienable rights, including the rights to self-determination and independence, continued international paralysis on the issue is inexcusable, as are the dismissive arguments that the issue is intractable or that peace is not possible at this time.

The international consensus on a just solution is firm and clear, and there is an abundance of multilateral

political and diplomatic tools for promoting the achievement of a peaceful resolution in accordance with international law, the relevant resolutions and the Charter of the United Nations. We must use those tools responsibly and urgently — and NAM members are ready to do so. We therefore urge the Security Council to act forthwith to shoulder its responsibilities in that regard.

The Security Council must uphold its duty under the Charter to maintain international peace and security and act to implement its own resolutions. The question of Palestine cannot be the exception to international law and the authority of the Council. In particular, the Movement remains deeply concerned that this organ has for too long been unable to fulfil its mandate on this important question 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 on the Palestinian question so as to uphold its obligations for the achievement of a just and peaceful solution to that protracted conflict and tragic injustice. Not only will that open a new era for the Palestinian and Israeli peoples and the region but, it will also restore credibility to this organ and to our international system as a whole.

In that regard, NAM still believes that resolution 2334 (2016) provides the most effective and viable path to peace, setting forth the essential requirements and parameters for the realization of a just outcome on the basis of the two-State solution based on the 4 June 1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine, in accordance with the long-standing terms of reference of peace endorsed by the international community — the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions; the Madrid principles, including the principle of land for peace; the Arab Peace Initiative; and the Middle East Quartet road map — while ensuring the Palestinian people's fulfilment of their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, as well as a just solution for the plight of Palestine refugees in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

NAM therefore reiterates its call for full respect for resolution 2334 (2016) and the effective implementation of its provisions and obligations, particularly by the occupying Power, including in terms of States'

obligations with regard to distinction — a matter central to ensuring accountability.

The Movement also underscores 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 calls on the Security Council to urgently examine all practical ways and means to ensure the implementation of that resolution, as it has pledged to do.

Similarly, the States members of the Movement continue to call for full respect for and 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. Respect for Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and international law would inherently create the necessary conditions to bring the occupation to an end by 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 to help de-escalate the volatile situation on the ground, which has been marked by increasing violence, particularly settler violence and terror, leading to the tragic loss of lives of more civilians, including children, and to foster an appropriate environment in the pursuit of peace. That must include a halt to all unilateral and unlawful measures by Israel, the occupying Power, in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.

Actions that violate Security Council resolutions and the historic and legal status quo of Jerusalem and its holy sites are provocative and dangerous. They destroy the prospects for peace and should not be supported or celebrated by anyone. In that regard, we reiterate the call for full respect for the historic and legal status quo and the historical Hashemite custodianship over the Christian and Muslim holy sites in the city and for the protection of the sanctity of the holy sites.

In that regard, the Movement stresses that the Jordanian Ministry of Awqaf Islamic Affairs and Holy Places is the only entity authorized under the provisions of international humanitarian law to manage all the affairs of Al-Aqsa Mosque in its entirety of 144,000 square metres. Maintaining comprehensive calm

requires Israel's respect for the legal and historical status quo of the Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif. There is a need to find a real political horizon that guarantees the fulfilment of all legitimate rights of the brotherly Palestinian people on the basis of the two-State solution.

Moreover, threats of annexation by Israeli officials, continued settlement activities and the 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 lawful countermeasures.

The Movement commends the efforts of His Majesty King Mohammed VI as Chair of the Al-Quds Committee of the Organization of 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 — particularly the grave humanitarian situation — remains of great concern to the Movement. NAM reiterates its call for the complete lifting of the illegal 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 and the relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution 1860 (2009) and in the context of the unequivocal calls and overriding responsibility to bring an end to the illegitimate, belligerent Israeli foreign occupation since 1967 of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.

In the absence of a just solution, the States members of NAM reiterate their call for the continued provision of the needed humanitarian and socioeconomic assistance to the Palestinian people, including Palestine refugees. The Movement therefore reaffirms the continued 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, the NAM urges the international community to provide UNRWA with sufficient and predictable funding to ensure the continuity of its indispensable efforts in all fields of operation.

As Israel has clearly abdicated from its obligations as the occupying Power to protect the Palestinian civilian population, as prescribed by the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, the Movement also reiterates its 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 further innocent human lives. Failure to do that can lead only to further escalations and the tragic loss of more civilian lives.

In this regard, the Movement reiterates grave concern with respect to lack of accountability for all violations committed by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, 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. Member States of the Movement 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. NAM reiterates that Israel must comply with its duties and responsibilities under international law and be held to account if it continues its blatant contempt of this organ and of its international legal obligations.

With regard to the situation in the occupied Syrian Golan, the 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 of the occupied area, as well as the Israeli measures to apply its jurisdiction and administration there, are null and void and have no legal effect. In this regard, and in line with NAM's principled position, the Movement once again demands 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, NAM reiterates condemnation of the unilateral and arbitrary proclamation by the United States of America that recognized the Golan Heights as part of Israel. Moreover, the NAM member States 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).

In conclusion, the Movement takes this opportunity to reiterate its call for the international community to act collectively and with responsibility to uphold international law and 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. The States members of NAM reaffirm their commitment to promoting a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects, including alleviating the plight of the Palestine refugees, and reaffirm their support for 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.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Ms. Squeff (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Brazilian delegation for facilitating today's important debate.

Argentina continues to believe that the only solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is through negotiations between both parties aimed at seeking agreement on the final-status issues identified in the Oslo Accords, namely, Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, borders and security measures.

My country supports a peaceful, definitive and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question, through a two-State solution on the basis of the 1967 borders and on what the parties determine in the negotiation process, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Argentina reaffirms its support for the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an

independent and viable State recognized by all nations, as well as the right of the State of Israel to live in peace with its neighbours within secure and internationally recognized borders.

Likewise, Argentina reiterates its concern over the persistent and continuous growth of illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories and urges the cessation of their expansion. As the General Assembly has repeatedly stated, settlements are contrary to international law, hinder peace, weaken the prospect of a two-State solution, with the two States living side by side in peace and security, and thereby promote the perpetuation of an unsustainable status quo. The gravity of the situation has been recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 2334 (2016), the terms of which we fully reaffirm.

On the other hand, Argentina condemns all violent actions by Hamas and other armed groups. It is necessary for Palestinian leaders to sincerely address Israeli security concerns. In this context, we recognize Israel's right to exercise its legitimate self-defence, emphasizing the importance of Israel acting in ways that respect the country's obligations under international humanitarian law, taking into account, in particular, the principles of distinction and proportionality.

With regard to the situation in East Jerusalem, Argentina reaffirms the special status of Jerusalem, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution 478 (1980) and, in this regard, rejects any unilateral attempt to modify it, in particular with regard to the Old City, which has a special significance for the three great monotheistic religions. Argentina believes that Jerusalem is one of the issues whose final status must be defined by the parties in bilateral negotiations.

In view of the financial difficulties being experienced by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, Argentina wishes to reiterate its full support for the Agency's work, which contributes to preventing a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. We also reaffirm the need for the international community to develop appropriate responses to ensure that it has the necessary funds to guarantee that its services are not interrupted.

In relation to the Syrian Golan, Argentina maintains a principled position with regard to the illegality of the

acquisition of territories by force and respect for the territorial integrity of States.

We firmly believe in the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes and deem important the quest for a negotiated solution to the conflict between Syria and Israel so as to put an end to the occupation of the Golan Heights as soon as possible, in line with resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace.

In conclusion, Argentina wishes once again to urge the Palestinians and Israelis to resume peace talks, acting in good faith and with flexibility and in line with international law and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, in the endeavour to reach an agreement on the outstanding final-status issues for Palestine in all of their aspects.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Kader.

Ms. Kader: I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

As we meet once again to discuss the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, the current trajectory is becoming increasingly untenable and grimmer owing to the ongoing Israeli human rights violations against the Palestinian people and grave breaches of international law, which are well-documented and inherent in Israel's intricate system of apartheid, colonization, racism and occupation, as outlined in many United Nations documents, including the reports of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967.

The OIC secretariat expresses its deep concern over Israel's ongoing violations against the occupied city of Jerusalem, its citizens and holy sites, especially Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif; Israel's illegal colonial settlement policy, which has intensified especially in and around occupied Jerusalem; the blockade on the Gaza Strip; and the inhumane situation experienced by Palestinian prisoners, among other violations, which, in many cases, amount to war crimes.

The OIC secretariat welcomes and recalls in that regard the recent report issued by the independent international commission of inquiry on the protests in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, which clearly indicated that

“Israel has no intention of ending the occupation, has clear policies for ensuring complete control over the occupied Palestinian territory and is acting to alter the demography through the maintenance of a repressive environment for Palestinians and a favourable environment for Israeli settlers”. (*A/HRC/50/21, para. 70*)

The report highlighted the fact that Israel’s impunity is feeding increased resentment among the Palestinian people and is fuelling recurrent tensions, instability and the protraction of the conflict as well as an endless cycle of violence that compromises the chances for sustainable peace and security. It concluded that ending the occupation of lands by Israel, in full conformity with Security Council resolutions, remains essential to ending the systematic recurrence of tensions, the instability and the protracted nature of the conflict.

The OIC secretariat would like to voice once again its strong condemnation of the heinous assassination of the journalist Shireen Abu Akleh by the Israeli occupation forces while on duty reporting facts and documenting the crimes committed against the Palestinian people last May. It stresses that that crime constituted a blatant violation of international law and norms and requires immediate investigation and the holding of those responsible to account.

Among other violations, reports have documented the killing and wounding of hundreds of Palestinian citizens in the second quarter of 2022. The OIC secretariat reaffirms in that regard that the accountability deficit towards the countless Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people creates an environment in which impunity thrives, encouraging further abuses and violations while victims and their families are denied justice and redress.

The OIC secretariat calls upon this international body to uphold its responsibility to ensure Israel’s respect for and full compliance with the provisions of international law and United Nations resolutions, including, *inter alia*, resolution 2334 (2016), which provides a clear path towards putting an end to Israeli violations, reviving a multilaterally sponsored peace process leading to the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution based on international law, United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

In closing, the OIC secretariat reiterates its full support for the Palestinian people in their endeavour to regain their legitimate inalienable rights, including

their right to return, to self-determination and to the establishment of a State of Palestine with full sovereignty and independence on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Ms. Pyo (Republic of Korea): At the outset, the Republic of Korea reaffirms its support for a two-State solution, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements. My delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate its position that the status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem must be respected. We strongly urge all sides to resume peace talks, and we restate our support for the mediation efforts of the Quartet and the international community.

We would also like to express our support for the efforts of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process to that end.

My delegation remains deeply concerned about the Israeli settlement advancement, demolitions and evictions. Such unilateral actions are not helpful in addressing the current situation. As resolution 2334 (2016) clearly underlines, such settlements have no legal validity and constitute a flagrant violation of international law. In particular, the settlement plans in the E-1 and E-2 areas in the West Bank, which could precipitate the territorial and geographical disconnection of a future independent State of Palestine, must not be advanced.

It is also very alarming that the number of violent incidents in both Israel and Palestine has increased. We call on all sides to refrain from any actions or incitement that could escalate tensions.

Furthermore, no terrorist attacks can be justified. Any form of violence against civilians must stop immediately. Most of all, those who are responsible for such reprehensible acts must be held accountable.

We also echo the Secretary-General’s statement calling for an independent and transparent investigation into the killing of Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, as well as ensuring accountability for those responsible. We take note of the briefing by the spokesperson of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the conclusion of the Office’s independent monitoring in that context.

We remain concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip due to food and energy price hikes. The role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugees, particularly as concerns taking care of the health and education of girls and boys, is now more critical than ever. In that regard, the Korean Government

will remain steadfast in supporting UNRWA through continued financial contributions.

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

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.