



Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

9609th meeting
Thursday, 18 April 2024, 5 p.m.
New York

Provisional

President: Mrs. Frazier (Malta)

Members:

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| Algeria | Mr. Bendjama |
| China | Mr. Fu Cong |
| Ecuador | Mr. De La Gasca |
| France | Mrs. Broadhurst Estival |
| Guyana | Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett |
| Japan | Mr. Uemura |
| Mozambique | Mr. Afonso |
| Republic of Korea | Mr. Sangjin Kim |
| Russian Federation | Mr. Nebenzia |
| Sierra Leone | Mr. Kanu |
| Slovenia | Mr. Žbogar |
| Switzerland | Mrs. Baeriswyl |
| United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Dame Barbara Woodward |
| United States of America | Mr. Wood |

Agenda

Admission of new members

Letter dated 3 April 2024 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2024/286)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. *Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room AB-0928 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).



The meeting was called to order at 5 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Admission of new members

Letter dated 3 April 2024 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2024/286)

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

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

There being no objection, it is so decided.

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

In a letter dated 2 April 2024 addressed to the Secretary-General, the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine referred to the application of the State of Palestine for membership in the United Nations, contained in document S/2011/592, dated 23 September 2011, and requested that renewed consideration be given to that application by the Security Council. The letter has been issued as document S/2024/286.

The report of the Committee on the Admission of New Members concerning the application of the State of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations has been issued as document S/2024/313.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2024/312, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Algeria.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): Before I deliver my statement, I would like to express my gratitude to you, Madam President, for organizing this meeting and for your outstanding efforts in presiding over the Security

Council this month; we truly value your hard work and personal commitment.

On behalf of my country, Algeria, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and on behalf of countless other peace-loving countries, I stand before the highest organ entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security to introduce the draft resolution (S/2024/312) on the admission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations.

On 15 November 1988, my country, Algeria, was home to the declaration of the independence of the State of Palestine. Today the call of history resounds once again, and it is my honour to put before the Council the recommendation to admit the State of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations. It is a critical step towards rectifying a long-standing injustice. The late Yasser Arafat, in his epic declaration proclaiming the State of Palestine, lamented the exclusion of Palestinians from the international community. He said,

“At a time when the contemporary world was formulating its new value system, the balance of local and global power excluded the Palestinians from the common destiny”.

It became clear, once again, that justice alone does not move the wheel of history. And, of course, today we are striving to answer Yasser Arafat's call by urging our colleagues in the Security Council to vote in favour of admitting Palestine. It is the least we could all do to honour the debt — yes, the debt — we owe to its people. We say it loudly: the international community stands with Palestine. We remain steadfast in our commitment to a peaceful, sovereign and independent Palestinian State. That historical injustice must be addressed. The scale of justice must be rebalanced.

We firmly believe that Palestine fulfils all United Nations membership criteria as defined by the founding fathers in the Charter of the United Nations. We urge every Member to support the draft resolution. It is time for Palestine to take its rightful place among the community of nations. Seeking United Nations membership is a fundamental expression of Palestinian self-determination. The admission strengthens, not undermines, the two-State solution, a solution constantly under threat from those who seek to erase Palestinian identity and Palestinian aspirations. Peace will come from Palestine's inclusion, not from its exclusion.

While acknowledging the challenges—colonization, annexation, violence and the denial of Palestinian rights — our response must be clear: admit Palestine, as the first fundamental step towards peace. That membership will definitely consecrate the two-State solution that the occupying authorities continue openly to stand against. That membership will constitute a rejection of their attempt to erase the Palestinian people and to destroy the Palestinian State and every prospect of peace.

Let us welcome Palestine to the United Nations and, in doing so, relaunch a genuine peace process between equals, paving the way for a lasting peace in the Middle East. Failure to do so is again a denial by the Council itself of its responsibilities. Failure to act is a serious and unforgivable mistake. Failure to wake up today is licence for continued injustice and impunity. Failure to do so is everlasting shame. The call for Palestinian freedom must be heeded. The call for a free Palestine resonating across the globe must become a reality enjoyed by the Palestinian people.

I conclude with what the President of the Republic, Mr. Abdelmadjid Tebboune, stated before the General Assembly last year.

“The time has come for Palestine to become a full Member of the United Nations, even though its territory remains occupied. We will not abandon this cause. And we will not rest until the objective is achieved.”

The President: I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2024/312.

A vote was taken by a show of hands.

In favour:

Algeria, China, Ecuador, France, Guyana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Slovenia

Against:

United States

Abstaining:

Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The President: The draft resolution received 12 votes in favour, 1 against and 2 abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

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

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): This day could have gone down in history as a day when, after three quarters of a century, the international community at last made the right choice on the path towards correcting the many years of historical injustice done to Palestine and the legitimate aspirations of its heroic people. Because it was essentially a simple question — are the Palestinians worthy of being part of the global family, fully participating in all of the decisions of international life? — a question to which we have repeatedly answered “yes” when Israel was welcomed into the United Nations and when dozens of States also were released from the colonial yoke and were welcomed into the United Nations.

However, our American colleagues believe differently. Having used their veto for the fifth time since the beginning of the escalation in Gaza, they have once again demonstrated what they really think of the Palestinians. For Washington, they do not deserve to have their own State; they are only a barrier on the path towards realizing the interests of Israel.

For that reason, the United States is ready, until eternity, to turn a blind eye to the crimes of Israel against the civilians in Gaza and ignore the illegal settlement construction activity in West Jerusalem on the West Bank. The aim is to break the Palestinians’ will, to force them once and for all to submit to the occupying Power, to turn them into servants and second-class persons and perhaps, once and for all, to exterminate them and force them out of their native territory.

That policy is only having the opposite impact at present — an absolute majority of the global community supports Palestine’s application to become a full Member of the world Organization. The suffering of Palestinian civilians is resounding in the hearts and minds of millions of people around the world. In countries that supply weapons to West Jerusalem, there are louder and louder voices calling for those supplies to be banned.

Today’s use of the veto by the United States delegation is a hopeless attempt to stop the inevitable course of history. The results of the voting, where Washington was practically in complete isolation, speak for themselves. Playing into the hands of their ally and its most reckless actions and turning away from finding just solutions on the basis of existing international legal

norms is a direct path towards further sliding into the mire of war, which could encompass the entire region.

Even if the United States and Israel benefit, it will only be for the short term. At the same time, Washington will once and for all remove itself from the list of peace-loving and respected States, having fully shared responsibility with its Israeli allies for the deaths of tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians. That is not worthy of a great Power, and history will not forgive it for that. We call on the United States to listen to the voice of reason, to think about the consequences of its decisions and to immediately join in the efforts of the other members of the Security Council to establish an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): The United States has worked vigorously and with determination to support Palestinian statehood in the context of a comprehensive peace agreement that would permanently resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Since the attacks of 7 October, President Biden has been clear in that sustainable peace in the region can be achieved only through a two-State solution, with Israel's security guaranteed. There is no other path that guarantees Israel's security and future as a democratic Jewish state. There is no other path that guarantees that Palestinians can live in peace and with dignity in a State of their own. And there is no other path that leads to regional integration between Israel and all its Arab neighbours, including Saudi Arabia.

We also have long been clear that premature actions here in New York, even with the best intentions, will not achieve statehood for the Palestinian people. As members of the Security Council, we have a special responsibility to ensure that our actions further the cause of international peace and security and are consistent with the requirements of the Charter of the United Nations. As reflected in the report (S/2024/313) of the Committee on the Admission of New Members, there was not unanimity among Committee members as to whether the applicant met the criteria for membership as set forth in Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations. For example, there are unresolved questions as to whether the applicant meets the criteria to be considered a State.

We have long called on the Palestinian Authority to undertake necessary reforms to help establish the attributes of readiness for statehood, and we note that Hamas — a terrorist organization — is currently

exerting power and influence in Gaza, an integral part of the State envisioned in this draft resolution (S/2024/312). For those reasons, the United States voted against this draft Security Council resolution. Again, the United States continues to strongly support a two-State solution. This vote does not reflect opposition to Palestinian statehood, but instead is an acknowledgement that it will only come from direct negotiations between the parties.

A central focus of United States policy prior to the 7 October Hamas terrorist attacks was to promote normalization between Israel and its Arab neighbours and, as a critical element of a normalization package, generate tangible benefits in a political horizon for the Palestinian people. That was based on the judgment of the United States that normalization is the most viable pathway to make progress on what had been an intractable situation between the Israelis and the Palestinians. In the aftermath of 7 October, conversations on potential normalization and a political horizon for the Palestinians that would lead to statehood and membership at the United Nations have continued. Hamas and its Iranian backers would probably prefer that that effort not succeed, but we are determined to see it through. It remains the view of the United States that the most expeditious path towards statehood for the Palestinian people is through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, with the support of the United States and other partners. We believe that that approach can tangibly advance Palestinian goals in a meaningful and enduring way.

We also believe, in the light of Iran's unprecedented and outrageous actions over the past week, that Israel's neighbours would stand to benefit greatly from normalization. The United States is committed to intensifying its engagement — with the Palestinians and the rest of the region — not only to address the current crisis in Gaza, but to advance a political settlement that will create a path to Palestinian statehood and membership in the United Nations.

The United States will continue to oppose unilateral measures that undermine the prospect of a two-State solution. That includes any actions that violate the principles that Secretary Blinken has emphasized for months: that Gaza cannot be a platform for terrorism, that there should be no Israeli re-occupation of Gaza and that the size of Gaza's territory should not be reduced. As we have said before, we believe that a two-State solution, coupled with those elements, is the best

way to achieve a durable peace in the region, along with security for Israelis and Palestinians.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): France would like to thank Algeria for submitting this draft resolution (S/2024/312), which it voted in favour of.

It is time to achieve a global political settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, on the basis of the two-State solution — the only option that can meet the long-term security needs of Israel and the legitimate aspirations of Palestinians for a State. As the President of the Republic recalled, France is not shying away from this issue. It is in that context that, upon the initiative of Algeria, we are in favour of elevating the status of Palestine in the United Nations and admitting it as a full Member. That admission must allow for the resumption of a decisive and irreversible process to implement the two-State solution and the strengthening of the Palestinian Authority in the Palestinian territories, both in Gaza and in the West Bank. The Palestinian Authority must be able to effectively and efficiently exercise its responsibilities across all the territories of a future Palestinian state.

The conflict in Gaza — triggered by the terrorist attack by Hamas and other terrorist groups on 7 October, which we condemn in the strongest possible terms — shows how essential it is for the Security Council to unequivocally commit to a political solution to the conflict, while also strengthening its humanitarian action. We therefore continue to demand an immediate and lasting ceasefire and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

Mrs. Rodrigues Birkett (Guyana): I wish to thank the delegation of Algeria for putting forward the draft resolution (S/2024/312) and for being fully transparent from the very beginning about the approach it intended to take.

Thirteen years after the last request (see S/PV.6624), today another call for justice was made by the Palestinian people. But the Council's response was not enough to deliver that justice. Guyana raised its hand for justice today because, for us, it was the right choice, and it was long overdue. The Palestinian question has been before the Council since 1947. From that time, there have been at least 792 formal meetings of the Council. An examination of those meeting records provided some key revelations about the Council's approach to

the Palestinian question, three of which I will highlight very briefly.

First, over those decades, Council members have, *inter alia*, acknowledged the need to address the various dimensions of the Palestinian question, consistently stressed the need for the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination and emphasized the need for the realization of the two-State solution. However, while that shows that the Council has largely been sympathetic to the Palestinian cause, that sympathy has not generated enough political will to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question.

That takes me to my second point. The Council's historic sympathy for the Palestinian people has led to many band-aid measures to address these symptoms of the Palestinian question. We have not been able to comprehensively address the root cause of the problem, namely, the lengthy delay in the creation of an independent State of Palestine. The draft resolution we voted on a moment ago was an important step towards addressing that gap, and Guyana deeply regrets that it was not adopted. Without getting to the root of the problem, the symptoms will persist, and the reactive cycle will continue. The people of Palestine deserve a clear political horizon and a path to a comprehensive and just peace.

The third issue is the serious lack of accountability that has accompanied the Palestinian question from 1948 to the present day. If the occupying Power were held to account for its continuous violations of international law, the path to a free and independent Palestine would have been cleared a long time ago. The impunity must end.

Guyana supports the State of Palestine's full membership in the United Nations and believes that it has met all the requirements set out in Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations, which are the only ones to be taken into consideration for the admission of a Member into the United Nations. We are therefore deeply disappointed that the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people were not met today. Guyana had hoped that the Council's historic sympathy and apparent empathy with the Palestinian cause could have translated into strong political will this time around, given the existential threat Palestinians currently face. That notwithstanding, Guyana reaffirms its unwavering commitment to continue working with the Council and

the entire United Nations membership to secure justice for the Palestinian people. To the Palestinian people, I say that Guyana will never abandon it. We will continue to use our voice until justice is served.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): Slovenia voted in favour of the recommendation of the Security Council for membership of the State of Palestine in the United Nations.

The two-State solution, where two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace, is the only long-term sustainable option. Slovenia continues calling for full respect of international law and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. At this point, we have two main objectives — addressing the current situation in Gaza and resuming the political process towards a two-State solution. We are of the view that the membership of the State of Palestine in the United Nations could significantly support that process, which should address all outstanding issues, support the State of Palestine and guarantee security for Israel. Membership in the United Nations is not an alternative to negotiations, but complementary to them. We believe that the United Nations should play a crucial role in the peace process. Both States should therefore have equal status at the United Nations.

Slovenia is of the view that Palestine meets the criteria set out by Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations. Granting United Nations membership to Palestine could be an important step towards peace. It would strengthen the role of the Palestinian Authority and would contribute to the security of Israel, as well. We maintain our view that Palestine's right to self-determination and United Nations membership are not contrary to Israel's right to exist and be secure. We believe that any two-State solution must be built on mutual recognition and sovereign equality.

Mr. Sangjin Kim (Republic of Korea): It was 1949 when the Republic of Korea first applied for membership to the United Nations. However, it was not until 1991 — 42 long years after its original application — that the Republic of Korea was granted United Nations membership. We therefore truly understand what it means for people to aspire to be admitted to this paramount international Organization.

The Republic of Korea believes that the only viable and sustainable way to resolve the Palestinian question and establish lasting peace is through the realization of the two-State solution. Yet, for several decades,

negotiations between parties have been stalled. The Republic of Korea voted in favour of draft resolution S/2024/312, on the admission of Palestine into the United Nations, in consideration of our view that renewed and strengthened efforts are needed to revitalize the path towards a two-State solution.

Regardless of today's results on the draft resolution, we hope that the parties will soon resume negotiations on the basis of dialogue and compromise for a peaceful resolution of the Palestinian question. For that to happen, the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza must end soon.

We once again call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas and other groups and expanded humanitarian aid throughout Gaza. All regional actors should exercise full restraint to avert further dangerous escalation in the region.

Against that backdrop, even though today's draft resolution on the admission of Palestine was not adopted, it is clear that all members of the Security Council share the view that the two-State solution imperative is the most viable long-term resolution to the Palestinian question and the best way, more broadly, to reduce long-standing regional tensions.

We note that our vote today does not constitute a bilateral recognition of Palestine as a State. In future, we will consider this matter at a time that is most conducive to the resolution of the conflict. We also hope that the negotiations between the parties can resume in the near future.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom reiterates its commitment to making progress towards a two-State solution in which a safe and secure Israel lives alongside a sovereign, viable Palestinian State.

We agree that the people of the West Bank and Gaza must be given the political perspective of a credible route to a Palestinian State and a new future, and it needs to be irreversible. That is not entirely in our gift, but our recognition of a Palestinian State should be part of it. We believe that such recognition of Palestinian statehood should not come at the start of a new process, but it does not have to be at the very end of it. We must start with fixing the immediate crisis in Gaza, which is occupied Palestinian territory and must be part of a future Palestinian State.

However, Hamas is still in control of parts of Gaza, and Israeli hostages remain in captivity. That shows that we are still at the start of the process. Ensuring that Hamas is no longer in charge of Gaza and removing the group's capacity to launch attacks against Israel are essential and unavoidable steps on the road to lasting peace, as is working together to support the new Palestinian Government as it takes much-needed steps on reform and resumes governance in Gaza, as well as the West Bank.

We abstained in the voting on draft resolution S/2024/312 today because we must keep our focus first, on securing an immediate pause in order to get aid in and hostages out, and only then, on making progress towards a sustainable ceasefire without a return to destruction, fighting and loss of life.

Our Foreign Secretary is in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories this week to offer our support towards advancing that plan. We will continue to work urgently to help bring peace and galvanize a political process towards a two-State solution that provides justice and security for both Israelis and Palestinians.

Mr. Uemura (Japan): Last month the Security Council was finally able to adopt resolution 2728 (2024), which demands an immediate ceasefire in Gaza in the hopes of bringing about a real change on the ground.

However, a ceasefire has not been realized and the humanitarian catastrophe is deepening. The people of Gaza are facing unprecedented tragedy and hardship. Much of Gaza's population lives in despair, with little food and water and deprived of human dignity.

In the meantime, serious diplomatic efforts are being made to bring about a cessation of hostilities and the release of the hostages. We reiterate our strong support for the crucial role of the United States, Egypt and Qatar to that end and appreciate their tireless efforts.

Once a sustainable ceasefire is in place, the formation of a reconstruction mechanism for Gaza, with the support of the international community, and the establishment of effective governance by a reformed Palestinian Authority will be essential.

Japan has strongly upheld the Palestinian right to self-determination and consistently supported a two-State solution in which Israel and a future independent Palestinian State can live side by side in peace and security. For decades, we have provided robust support

for political, economic and social initiatives towards Palestinian State-building.

Our principled position was reflected in our vote in favour of the 2012 General Assembly resolution 67/19, which granted Palestine the status of non-member observer State at the United Nations and expressed the hope that the Security Council would consider favourably the application of Palestine for admission as a full-fledged United Nations Member State.

This is the first time since 2011 that the Security Council has deliberated on Palestinian membership in the United Nations. The intervening years have been marked by little progress in direct negotiations between the parties, whereas most recently we have witnessed escalating regional conflict, which has caused untold suffering.

At this critical moment, Japan voted in favour of today's draft resolution S/2024/312 as a comprehensive decision, recognizing that Palestine meets the criteria for admission to membership in the United Nations, while also taking into account the perspective of promoting the establishment of a Palestinian State through peaceful negotiations between the parties concerned.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland has abstained in the voting on draft resolution S/2024/312. Without opposing it, we believe that at present, that step is not conducive to easing the situation and finding a peaceful solution, given the great instability and the conflict on the ground. We believe that it would be better to proceed with the admission of Palestine to the United Nations as a full Member at a time when such a step could be in line with an emerging peace.

However, this abstention in no way alters Switzerland's firm support for the two-State solution. We believe that only a negotiated solution in which two States, Palestine and Israel, living side by side in peace and security, can lead to lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

We have just discussed in detail the catastrophic situation in the Middle East. What is urgently needed is the immediate implementation of Security Council resolutions and a ceasefire. We must — and without further delay, if we are to restore people's prospect of a peaceful future in which they can all live in dignity — re-establish a political horizon for a negotiated solution to the conflict.

Switzerland stands ready to support efforts that can rebuild hope for peace through a solution with two democratic States, living side by side in peace, within safe and recognized borders, based on the borders of 1967, including with Gaza as an integral part of a Palestinian State.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Today is a sad day. Owing to the veto by the United States, the application of Palestine for full membership in the United Nations has been rejected, and the decades-long dream of the Palestinian people ruthlessly dashed. China finds the decision by the United States most disappointing.

An independent State of Palestine has been a long-cherished dream of generations of Palestinian people. Its full membership in the United Nations is a crucial step in that historical direction and process. As early as 2011, Palestine submitted an application. Owing to some countries' opposition, the Council's action at that time was put on hold. Thirteen years is long enough. And yet, we still hear some complaints asserting that there is not enough time, and there is no need to rush to take action. Those claims are disingenuous. The admission of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations is more urgent now than ever before.

The relevant countries' premise that they are not able to support Palestine's membership in the United Nations is on the grounds that the State of Palestine does not have the capacity to govern. We do not agree with that assessment. Over the past 13 years, the situation in Palestine has changed in many ways, the most fundamental of which has been the expansion of settlements in the West Bank. Palestine's survival space as a State has been steadily squeezed, and the foundation of the two-State solution has been continuously eroded. The relevant countries have ignored that and adopted an attitude of acquiescence or even connivance. And now they are questioning Palestine's capacity to govern. That is gangster logic, which confuses right and wrong.

What is even more unacceptable is that some countries are challenging Palestine's eligibility for membership in the United Nations under the Charter of the United Nations, implying that there still remains a question as to whether Palestine is peace-loving. Such an allegation is outrageous and a step too far. For the Palestinian people, who are suffering under occupation, that is tantamount to rubbing salt in their wounds and extremely insulting. If it is out of a political calculation

to oppose Palestine's full membership in the United Nations, it would be better to simply say so, instead of making excuses to re-victimize the Palestinian people.

The establishment of an independent State is an inalienable national right for the Palestinian people. It cannot be subject to questioning or bargaining. The relevant countries make direct negotiations between Palestine and Israel a prerequisite, claiming that Palestine's membership in the United Nations can be the result only of negotiations. That is putting the cart before the horse. Israel's rejection of the two-State solution is exceedingly clear. Against that backdrop, the admission of the State of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations would allow Palestine to enjoy equal status with Israel and would help to create the conditions for the resumption of negotiations between the two sides. All countries that genuinely support the two-State solution should not stand in the way of Palestine's full membership in the United Nations.

The wheel of history is rolling forward. The trend of the times cannot be countered. We are convinced that the day will come when the State of Palestine will enjoy the same rights as other Member States of the United Nations, that the two States of Palestine and Israel will be able to live side by side in peace as neighbours, with the two peoples, Palestinians or Israelis, living in tranquillity and happiness. China will continue to make unremitting efforts and play a constructive role for the early realization of that day.

Mr. De La Gasca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Historically, Ecuador has supported the Palestinian people in their legitimate right to have a State free from foreign occupation and has supported the processes leading to their self-determination and full independence, in accordance with the fundamental principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

On 24 December 2010, Ecuador recognized Palestine as a free and independent State within the 1967 borders. Subsequently, in 2012, Ecuador co-sponsored and voted in favour of resolution 67/19 in which the General Assembly granted observer State status to Palestine. And since 2014, Ecuador has maintained an embassy in Ramallah, Palestine, and Palestine maintains an embassy in Quito.

Today once again, the vote of Ecuador demonstrated its commitment to the people of Palestine, reaffirming its recognition from 14 years ago. My country hopes

that soon the conditions will be in place that will allow the Council, unanimously, to recommend the admission of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations.

Mr. Afonso (Mozambique): Mozambique commends the presidency of Malta for convening this meeting to take action on historic draft resolution S/2024/312, on the admission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations. We extend our deep appreciation to Algeria and the entire Group of Arab States for their leadership in submitting this text to the Council.

On 12 August 1988, the Republic of Mozambique formally recognized the State of Palestine as an independent and sovereign State. We did so because of our deep belief that peoples are born with the inherent right to self-determination, independence and sovereignty. That right is deeply anchored in the Charter of the United Nations, in the principles and norms of international law and in the natural law itself. It is a right that does not depend on a plebiscite or referendum or, for that matter, on the judgment of other alien peoples or Governments. It is therefore on that basis that we, Mozambique, as many other nations in the world, were born and entered the concert of nations. We were admitted into the United Nations family in September 1975, after a protracted 10-year struggle for liberation.

We wish to recall that, as of today, 18 April, 140 United Nations Member States have extended their recognition to the State of Palestine. That quasi-universal recognition is a testament that Palestine fulfils the requirements of statehood, which include a population, territory and Government and the capacity to engage in relations with other States.

We consider that the conditions are ripe for Palestine to be a full Member of the United Nations. Under Article 4 of the Charter and on the basis of our record since 1988, Palestine is clearly a peace-loving nation. Throughout the years, it has demonstrated its acceptance of the obligations contained in the Charter, and it has shown the ability and willingness to carry out those obligations.

We wish to state that Mozambique entertains diplomatic relations with the State of Israel. That is the foundation on which we embrace the vision of a two-State solution, of two independent and sovereign States, Israel and Palestine, both as full Members of the United Nations, coexisting as good neighbours, living side by side in peace and security, as prescribed by the Charter

of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. In particular, that is fully in line with resolution 242 (1967), which was unanimously adopted by the Council on 22 November 1967.

Those are the reasons why Mozambique voted in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Kanu (Sierra Leone): We thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting, and we commend the presidency of Malta for the manner in which it has conducted the work of the Committee on the Admission of New Members and the Security Council on the important application for admission to membership of the United Nations by the State of Palestine. I also thank Algeria for submitting the draft resolution (S/2024/312) and for their leadership in the Council regarding the plight and aspirations of the Palestinian people.

In the high-level open debate on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone this morning elaborated on our position on the issue (see S/PV.9608) — that is, in the context of the request for the admission of the State of Palestine as a Member of the United Nations 13 years after Palestine’s application was first considered by the Committee on the Admission of New Members. Sierra Leone itself recognizes the basis for such a request, which, in our view, is legitimate and could create the pathway to a political horizon founded on the principles of the two-State solution based on General Assembly resolution 181 (II), which recommends an independent Arab and an independent Jewish State in line with Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Sierra Leone supported and voted in favour of the draft resolution for the State of Palestine to be admitted as a Member of the United Nations. Our support was in line with, and within the context of, our consideration of Article 4 of the Charter and the guidance provided by the International Court of Justice on its advisory opinion on the conditions of admission of a State to membership in the United Nations, issued on 28 May 1948.

We regret that the draft resolution was not adopted. We are of the firm view that membership would have resonated with the principle of equality of States as enshrined in the Charter and certainly would have strengthened the two-State solution, with an independent Arab State and an independent Jewish State living side by side in peace, security and stability.

The State of Palestine's membership at the United Nations may have been delayed, as often happens in regrettable periods of injustice. But as the arc of the moral universe, which may be long but bends towards justice, the United Nations membership for the State of Palestine cannot be denied.

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): Again, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and all peace-loving Member States, I am deeply grateful to all those who voted in favour of the draft resolution we submitted (S/2024/312). The overwhelming support for the application of the State of Palestine sends a crystal-clear message: the State of Palestine deserves its rightful place among the Members of the United Nations.

To those who were unable to support the admission of the State of Palestine today, we really hope that they will have to do so next time, when the Security Council will reconsider the question of the admission of Palestine again. Yes, we will return, stronger and more vocal, and we will be backed by the overwhelming majority of the General Assembly.

As President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of Algeria has said, Algeria's efforts will not cease until the State of Palestine becomes a full Member of the United Nations.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Malta.

In voting today for the admission of Palestine as a Member of the United Nations, Malta made a clear choice. We voted in favour of the two-State solution. We have voted in favour of an idea that has enjoyed the support of the vast majority of the international community for decades. United Nations membership is a necessary step for the Palestinians to achieve equal footing with the rest of the international community.

The request for United Nations membership comes at a difficult juncture. The unprecedented turmoil that has followed the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza is pushing the Palestinian people to a hopeless precipice. Malta has been unequivocal in that an immediate and permanent ceasefire is necessary to allow the necessary space for peace and to put a stop to further civilian suffering. Concrete efforts must also be made to bolster the Palestinian Authority towards governance over a unified West Bank and Gaza Strip.

We deeply regret that, following today's veto, that legitimate aspiration has not been realized. However, we must not lose sight of its validity. The realization of the two-State solution, along with efforts to promote sustainable solutions to the ongoing conflicts in the region, remains the only realistic foundation for sustainable peace and stability in the Middle East. It is our collective responsibility to explore all possible paths towards that just realization.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

Mr. Mansour (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): Our right to self-determination has never once been subject to bargaining or negotiation. Our right to self-determination is a natural right, a historic right, a legal right, a right to live in our homeland, Palestine, as an independent State that is free and sovereign.

Our right to self-determination is inalienable. It is not tied to a time or a time frame. Our right is eternal, permanent and continuous. It cannot be delayed, it cannot be suspended, and it has no statute of limitations. It is important that our right is not subject to manipulation, domination or conditions, especially by Israel, the occupying Power, the ethnic cleansing Power, the genocidal Power, the colonial Power that is determined to evict our people from their homeland, to eliminate their identity, to replace their history and their culture, to uproot their present and their civilization and to besiege their future and their horizons.

The people of Palestine will not disappear. We will not disappear. The people of Palestine are a historical fact that cannot be erased, no matter how strong and powerful the occupying Power is. The great Palestinian people have remained on their land not because of the charity or mercy of Israel but out of patience, steadfastness, hope and sacrifice despite occupation, oppression, enslavement and being besieged, persecuted, displaced, evicted and seeking refuge.

We have repeatedly warned of Israel's colonial policy in our land, which it not only declares openly but now boasts about. We have also warned of the absence of a horizon for a solution. We have warned of the dangers of ignoring the Palestinian question and its centrality, of ignoring the growing suffering of the Palestinian people. We have warned of the dangers of claiming that a just peace is possible in our region

without a just, comprehensive and lasting resolution to the Palestinian question.

We come to the Security Council today at an important historic moment, regionally and internationally, so that the Council would salvage what can be saved. We place Council members before a historic responsibility to establish the foundations of a just and comprehensive peace in our region. They have an opportunity to revive hope that has been lost among our peoples. Members have the opportunity to implement their commitment towards the two-State solution along the 1967 borders by taking actual action, firm action that cannot be manoeuvred or retracted.

The majority of the Security Council members have risen to the level of this historic moment, and they have stood on the side of justice, freedom and hope in line with the ethical, humanitarian and legal principles that must govern our world and in line with logic.

In that regard, we reiterate our sincere gratitude to sisterly Algeria, to the Arab and Islamic groups, to the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement and to the Maltese presidency of the Council, a dedicated presidency that has managed the proceedings of our Council wisely and efficiently. We express our gratitude to all those who supported the request for Palestinian membership and all those who voted in favour of the draft resolution (S/2024/312).

(spoke in English)

I was moved by all the statements by members, those who voted in favour and even those who voted differently, and by the passion contained in their commitment and understanding of the pain and the moment of the Palestinian people. I salute them in the name of the Palestinian people and their leadership.

(spoke in Arabic)

We accepted the two-State solution along the 1967 borders as an international vision of peace. Arab States had put forth the Arab Peace Initiative to support that vision. We built our State with the efforts of our daughters and sons and with the support and trust of the international community, despite the impediments and obstacles by Israel. We have engaged in the peace process in a manner that would secure our supreme national interests, and we have abided by the foundations of a peaceful and legal settlement to the conflict. The Palestinian leadership, under the presidency of President Mahmoud Abbas, continues to

be committed to that peaceful track, and we reiterate our call for an international peace conference to be held under multilateral international sponsorship, a conference that aims to put an end to the Israeli occupation and achieve the independence of the State of Palestine.

However the question remains: is there a true partner for peace in Israel? Is there a partner in peace with us in Israel? Israel insists, through its consecutive Governments, on maintaining occupation, on murder, on siege, on the eviction of people and on building settlements. Those are all policies and practices that run counter to the Charter and to the resolutions of the United Nations and are aimed at achieving just one objective — namely, to snuff out any hope of a sovereign and viable Palestinian State.

Israel believes that the State of Palestine is a permanent strategic threat to it and will do its best to block the sovereignty of a Palestinian State and to ensure that the Palestinian people are exiled, away from their land, or remain under its occupation forever.

It is now up to the Council members to determine who loves peace and who is the enemy of peace, who wants to save innocent lives and who seeks to commit genocide. Israel does not want a two-State solution. It does not want a Palestinian State. That is Israel's plot, agreed to by the Knesset and openly declared by its members and its representatives in the Council and everywhere within and outside the United Nations. That is the plot that Israeli politicians and Israeli Government officials proclaim. Netanyahu boasted of that plot as a political accomplishment in preventing "the establishment of the State of Palestine". He announced it in his delusional map, which he exhibited before the General Assembly last September (see A/78/PV.10) — a map of an Israel that stretches from the river to the sea, negating the existence of Palestine. That is the plot of his extremist Government — to get rid of Palestine and the Palestinians. That is delusional, but, regrettably, we have seen how costly that delusion has been in terms of innocent lives.

Does the Council know what Israel needs to carry out that delusional plot, the plot to expel the people and annex the land? All it needs is more time, more immunity, more lives and more blood. What is the international community going to do about it? What is the Security Council going to do about it, given that

it is responsible for maintaining international peace and security?

(spoke in English)

What is the Council going to do about it? What is it willing to do?

(spoke in Arabic)

Will it give Israel the time it needs to annex Palestinian land? Will the Council give Israel the immunity to expel and kill the people? Will it give Israel weapons so that it can claim more lives? Will the Council give Israel the veto power over our right to exist on our own land and over the right of the State of Palestine to be a full Member of the United Nations? The membership of the State of Palestine in the United Nations is not symbolic; rather, it is of the utmost importance to the Palestinians and to the peoples of the region at this critical juncture. It is a step that has been awaited since 1947.

(spoke in English)

Some waited from 1949 until 1992. We have been waiting since 1947, and we are in 2024.

(spoke in Arabic)

It is a necessary step towards redressing the historical injustice done to the Palestinian people since the partition decision, through the Nakba, to our present day. It is a necessary step to restore faith in international legitimacy and international law and in this Organization and its Charter, as well as to restore hope in the peaceful settlement of the conflict. It is one embodiment of our right to self-determination. It enshrines the legitimacy of the State of Palestine in a manner that cannot be reneged upon by any party, to protect and preserve the land of the State of Palestine from being handed over like a gift or divided up like leftovers, as has already happened.

The membership of the State of Palestine in the United Nations is an investment in peace.

(spoke in English)

If the Council wants to invest in peace, admit us to membership. It is an investment in peace.

(spoke in Arabic)

It is also a starting point for peace. Our full membership in the United Nations does not diminish the rights

of any Member State, and neither does it threaten or negate the membership of any other Member.

(spoke in English)

We just want to be equal to all other Members. We do not want to replace anyone. We want to enter the club as equals.

(spoke in Arabic)

The Council's support for granting the State of Palestine full membership places us on the path of hope.

(spoke in English)

It allows us not to lose hope, to keep hope alive.

(spoke in Arabic)

The failure to adopt the draft resolution will not break our will, dissuade us or defeat our resolve. The State of Palestine is inevitable. It exists. Some may see it as far off, and we see it as imminent, and we are honest about that.

We are the ones who endure oppression and injustice, and we are the most aware of the goals of that unjust occupation — because we are the ones living it — and the most aware of the just solution, and we tell the Council that the time for freedom is now.

(spoke in English)

It is the time for freedom. It is the time for a free Palestine.

(spoke in Arabic)

Remember that, after this meeting ends, there are innocent people in Palestine who are paying with their lives and the lives of their children the price of the Israeli occupation's arrogance — the price of double standards, of the blind bias in favour of Israel and of deferring justice, freedom and peace.

Our Palestinian people have endured all kinds of unbearable abuse at the hands of the Israeli occupier. It has now become clearer than ever before that this great people have not given up and will not give up their right to their land. Despite the horror of the tragedies, the bitterness of loss and the magnitude of the destruction and displacement, our Palestinian people have not lost their humanity, as our Palestinian people are now searching for the remnants of life, and there is no one anywhere more eager to live a normal life than our people in Gaza — Gaza the glorious, Gaza the great. Rather, all our Palestinian people everywhere want and

cling to life, like all the peoples of the earth — a people who yearn for freedom, a decent life and a peaceful life. Our Palestinian people will not disappear or fade away, and they have never been redundant. One way or another, the Council must deal with our people fairly.

(spoke in English)

We will not disappear. We love life. We love to live in freedom and dignity in our national homeland. We will not disappear. Either the Council deals with us with fairness and gives us our rights — or gives us our rights.

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

Mr. Erdan (Israel): I wish to begin by thanking the United States and, particularly, President Biden, for standing up for truth and morality in the face of hypocrisy and politics.

I sat here mere hours ago describing why draft resolution S/2024/312 is destructive. I explained how the Palestinian Authority does not meet even the basic criteria, that it has no authority over its territory and that it is a terror-supporting entity. How can one say, in seriousness, that the Palestinians are peace-loving? How? The Palestinians are paying terrorists to slaughter us. None of their leaders condemn terrorism nor the 7 October massacre. They call Hamas their brothers. The Palestinian representative called Hamas his brothers after the massacre. They do not even recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish State. Not even one

Palestinian leader will say that he recognizes Israel's right to exist as a Jewish State. Peace-loving indeed!

Hamas was not mentioned here today. That is not a coincidence since the Palestinian representative here does not represent Hamas. He does not represent at least half of the Palestinian people. Yet, regardless of the Palestinians' failure to meet the necessary criteria for United Nations membership, most Council members, sadly, decided to reward Palestinian terror with a Palestinian State. That is very sad because their vote will only further embolden Palestinian rejectionism and make peace almost impossible. Please remember that the next time the Palestinians reject another peace plan or refuse to even come to the negotiating table.

I have represented Israel at the United Nations for over three years and have taken part in dozens of meetings in the Council. Since the 7 October massacre, I have been here on a near-weekly basis, sometimes daily. I have repeated the same arguments in every debate — I have plead and convinced, or at least tried to convince. I have brought testimonies, presented photos and shown video footage.

Nevertheless, the Council has refused to even condemn. It has refused to listen; it has refused to act. It has even refused to check the facts. Today I will therefore not try to fix what is already broken. Speaking to the Council is like speaking to a brick wall. I pray that the day will come when the Council understands the magnitude of the mistake that it is making here. I pray that it will understand before it is too late.

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.