



SECURITY COUNCIL MEETINGS COVERAGE

United Nations

9021ST MEETING (AM)

SC/14869

25 APRIL 2022

Status Quo of Jerusalem's Holy Sites Must Be Upheld, Special Middle East Coordinator Tells Security Council, as Speakers Express Alarm over Recent Violent Clashes

The status quo on Jerusalem's holy sites must be upheld at all costs, speakers told the Security Council today, following the recent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces at Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount during religious holidays.

Giving updates to the 15-member organ, Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, said that, despite his hope that this month and its holy days would be a peaceful and celebratory time, the period has been marked by violence. The situation in Jerusalem, however, remains relatively calm despite inflammatory rhetoric and violent clashes between Palestinians and the Israeli security forces at the holy sites.

All sides must do their part to reduce tensions, uphold the status quo at the holy sites, and ensure their sanctity is respected by all, he said, welcoming statements by senior Israeli officials reiterating Israel's commitment to upholding the status quo and ensuring that only Muslims would be allowed to pray on the Holy Esplanade.

"At this sensitive and volatile moment, Israeli and Palestinian leaders have made some commendable efforts to ease tensions, condemn attacks and rein in violence," he said. Regional and international partners, such as the United Nations, Egypt and Jordan, have engaged to help restore calm and ensure continued access for Muslim worshippers, he said, stressing that "these efforts should continue".

The violence and spiralling tensions of the past month have underscored that efforts to manage the conflict are not a substitute for real progress towards resolving it, he said, stressing that a serious escalation is avoidable and sustained calm can open the space for more serious discussions about further improvements.

He then urged the parties to maintain calm so the final week of Ramadan can take place and be celebrated without interruption. "Having said that, we must not lose sight of the

imperative to end the occupation and advance towards a two-State reality," he said, expressing the United Nations' determination to support Israelis and Palestinians in moving towards that future.

In the ensuing discussion, Israel and Palestine traded accusations about the incidents at the site, which is referred to by Muslims as "Haram al-Sharif" and as "Temple Mount" by Jews.

The Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine said that a few days ago, Israeli occupying forces stormed the Aqsa Mosque compound/Haram al-Sharif, shooting at worshippers and desecrating the mosque with military boots and violence. He pointed out that 200 Palestinians, including women and children were wounded and 400 arrested, yet Israel claims it is upholding the historic status quo.

Not only does Israel use security to justify killing Palestinian children on their way to school, it labels Palestinian worshippers as terrorists, he continued. Jewish extremists and settlers are not merely visiting Haram al-Sharif, but are seeking a takeover. Israel has no authority over Haram al-Sharif where the historic and legal status quo must be upheld, he said, adding that the occupying Power is also targeting the Palestinian identity of the city.

Israel's representative, noting the convergence of Passover, Easter and Ramadan in 2022, said that what could have been an opportunity for peaceful coexistence was instead used by Palestinian extremists to incite violence. Hundreds of Palestinian terrorists on the Temple Mount posed a threat to both Muslim and Jewish worshippers, and Israeli police had to intervene.

It is ludicrous to place mobs of violent rioters on the same moral scale as a law-abiding democracy making every effort to keep the peace, and such a comparison plays directly into the web of lies spun by terror groups, he said. Israel always ensures the freedom of worship for all religions and is committed to protecting holy sites and the status quo. The only ones breaking the status quo on the Temple Mount are Palestinian terror groups.

Council members and non-members alike called for the status quo of the holy sites to be maintained, expressing alarm about the violent clashes and urging both sides to exercise restraint and pursue peace through dialogue. France's delegate said respect for the status quo of holy sites is essential and any allegations of the disproportionate use of force must be investigated. He added, however, that the root causes of conflict, such as the resumption of settlement activities and evictions, must end.

Mexico's representative urged Israel to refrain from altering the demographic composition, institutional structure and the physical, cultural and historical characters of Jerusalem.

The speaker for the United Arab Emirates acknowledged recent steps taken by the Israeli Government to reduce tensions and urged similar steps be taken to create a stable, sustainable political environment and revive the Middle East peace process.

The representative of the United States condemned the rocket launches from Gaza and Lebanon by militant groups that are seeking to exploit the situation in Jerusalem to advance their narrow interests, adding that his country is engaged diplomatically with all sides and remains firmly committed to a two-State solution.

Jordan's delegate called for international coordination to prevent alterations to the historic character of Jerusalem, adding that the Jordanian Administration is the only entity authorized to manage the affairs of the Aqsa Mosque compound in its entirety. His country has engaged with Palestinians and various international actors, such as Israel and the United States, within the framework of Jordan's continued role in protecting holy sites, he said, demanding that Israel allow free access to the Aqsa Mosque compound and lift the restrictive barriers.

The speaker for Lebanon commended the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for its role in de-escalating and reducing tensions and in preventing any miscalculation or escalation along the Blue Line, which remains indispensable in the context of the daily Israeli violations of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. He asked the Security Council to consider extending UNIFIL's provision of additional non-lethal material and logistical support to the Lebanese Armed Forces for one more year.

Syria's delegate reiterated the call to grant Palestine full membership in the United Nations, also noting the threat posed by Israel's actions to the security of his country and the region. Calling on the Security Council to enforce the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israel and Syria, he pointed to a series of repeated Israeli attacks on Syrian territory, the last of which occurred on 14 April, around Damascus. Israeli measures aimed at changing the legal and demographic nature of the Golan, seizing land and property, looting natural resources and wealth, and implementing settlement plans are aimed at perpetuating the occupation and obliterating the Syrian identity of the occupied Syrian Golan, he added.

The Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States, echoing other speakers, said that, while the Council devotes attention to recent developments in Europe, it must not neglect the protracted conflict in the Middle East. He urged the Council to preserve the legal status quo of East Jerusalem, calling for the Council to organize a field visit to the city, intensify efforts to help revive direct dialogue between the two parties and support Palestinian refugees and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Egypt's representative, noting that continued attempts to "Judaize" East Jerusalem portend a dangerous escalation, called for an end to all unilateral measures in the West Bank. For its part, his country has invested \$500 million in the Gaza Strip and continues to work with international and regional partners to ensure the resumption of negotiations towards a two-State solution.

Also speaking today were the representatives of Norway, Ghana, Kenya, Russian Federation, Ireland, Brazil, India, Gabon, China, Albania, United Kingdom, Algeria, Turkey, Morocco, Iran, Tunisia, Malaysia, Peru, South Africa, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Maldives, Bahrain,

Pakistan, Qatar, Venezuela, Kuwait, Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Oman and Cuba, as well as the Deputy Head of the European Union delegation. The Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People also spoke.

The meeting began at 10:06 a.m., suspended at 1:05 p.m., resumed at 3:03 p.m. and ended at 5:08 p.m.

Briefing

TOR WENNESLAND, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, said that, despite his hope that this month and its holy days would be a peaceful and celebratory time, the period has been marked by violence. In Jerusalem, the situation remains relatively calm despite inflammatory rhetoric and violent clashes between Palestinians and the Israeli security forces at the holy sites. All sides must do their part to reduce tensions, uphold the status quo at the holy sites, and ensure their sanctity is respected by all, he said, welcoming statements by senior Israeli officials reiterating Israel's commitment to upholding the status quo and ensuring that only Muslims would be allowed to pray on the Holy Esplanade. "At this sensitive and volatile moment, Israeli and Palestinian leaders have made some commendable efforts to ease tensions, condemn attacks and rein in violence," he said. Regional and international partners, such as the United Nations, Egypt and Jordan, have engaged to help restore calm and ensure continued access for Muslim worshippers, he said, stressing that "these efforts should continue".

Reporting on the sharp rise in daily violence, he said that, in the occupied West Bank and Israel, 23 Palestinians, including three women and four children, were killed by Israeli security forces during demonstrations, clashes, search-and-arrest operations, attacks and alleged attacks against Israelis and other incidents. Also, 541 Palestinians, including 30 women and 80 children were injured. Over two weeks, four terrorist attacks took place inside Israel – the deadliest such attacks in years. Afterwards, the presence of Israeli security forces was significantly reinforce along the separation barrier and military operations were bolstered inside the occupied West Bank. On 15 April, as many Palestinians gathered at the Aqsa Mosque compound, some threw stones, fireworks and other heavy objects towards Israeli security forces, who responded with stun grenades, sponge-tipped bullets and batons, including against bystanders.

Amid these clashes, several dozen Palestinians entered a mosque in the compound, with some continuing to throw stones and fireworks towards Israeli security forces, he said. After a standoff with those inside, Israeli police entered and arrested those barricaded inside. During the clashes, some damage was caused to the structure of the mosque; some 160 Palestinians were injured and 400 were arrested, most of whom were released later that day. According to the Israeli security forces, three policemen were injured. "The conduct of Israeli forces has raised concerns about possible excessive use of force," he said. Importantly, noon prayers later took place that day without major incident. Over the following days, there have been additional, though more limited, clashes at the holy sites and in and around the Old City.

On 19 April, Israeli authorities announced, in line with past practice, that non-Muslims would not be allowed to visit the Holy Esplanade between Friday, 22 April, and the end of the month of Ramadan. Despite the tensions, overall, hundreds of thousands of Muslims, Jews and Christians have been able to celebrate the holy days in and around the Old City in relative peace and without further escalation, he said, reiterating that perpetrators of all acts of violence must be held accountable and brought swiftly to justice and urging Israeli authorities to conduct thorough, transparent investigations into all instances of possible excessive use of force.

Against the backdrop of continued settlement activities and ongoing pressure on Palestinian communities in the occupied West Bank, as well as heightened tensions, settler-related violence remained high, particularly following the terrorist attacks in Israel, he said. On 10 April, dozens of Palestinians vandalized and set fire to a Jewish holy site located in Area A in the West Bank city of Nablus before being dispersed by Palestinian Security Forces.

Turning to Gaza, he said the security, humanitarian and economic situation remains deeply troubling. After several months with no rocket fire, militants in Gaza launched five rockets towards Israel, with one landing in the Israeli town of Sderot and causing property damage. The others were intercepted by the Iron Dome system, landed short in the Strip, or landed in open areas inside Israel. In retaliation, Israel Defense Forces conducted air strikes against what it said were Hamas targets in the Strip, with no injuries reported.

The cost of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East's (UNRWA) quarterly distribution has increased by 42 per cent since the end of 2021 in Gaza where the United Nations accounts for nearly 60 per cent of food supply. Spiking international prices for construction materials will also impact reconstruction efforts in Gaza. Without additional funding, the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNRWA will not be able to meet the food needs of the Palestinian population this year, which can have a destabilizing impact across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in Gaza, he said, echoing the Secretary-General's appeal for urgent support to UNRWA.

Turning to the wider region, the ceasefire between Israel and Syria is being maintained in a volatile security situation characterized by violations of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement between Israel and Syria by the parties, he said. These include the firing on 23 April of missiles from the Israeli-occupied Golan (Alpha side) across the ceasefire line, the crossing on several occasions of Israel Defense Forces tanks into the area of separation, the firing of projectiles from the Bravo side, and the continued presence of the Syrian armed forces in the area of separation.

Lebanon is preparing for parliamentary elections to be held on 15 May, he said. The United Nations continues to support the authorities' operational preparations, encourage women's political participation, and urge campaigning without hate speech. On 7 April the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced a staff-level agreement with the Government that would unlock around \$3 billion in financial aid, subject to the implementation of major reforms. He also

expressed a concern over the firing of a rocket across the Blue Line into Israel on 25 April, for which no group has claimed responsibility. The Israeli Defense Forces responded with artillery fire into Lebanon, with no casualties reported. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) continues to engage with the Lebanese Armed Forces to increase its counter rocket launching operations to prevent further such incidents and contribute to stability along the Blue Line.

The violence and spiralling tensions of the past month have underscored, yet again, that efforts to manage the conflict are not a substitute for real progress towards resolving it, he said, stressing that a serious escalation is avoidable and sustained calm can open the space for more serious discussions about further improvements. He urged the parties to maintain calm so the final week of Ramadan can take place and be celebrated without interruption. “Having said that, we must not lose sight of the imperative to end the occupation and advance towards a two-State reality,” he said. The United Nations remains committed to supporting Israelis and Palestinians to move towards that future, even as they address pressing security, economic and humanitarian needs.

Statements

RIYAD MANSOUR, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine, noting that every stone on every street of Jerusalem is a witness to the unique pluralism of the Holy Lands, said that, each year, thousands of Christian Orthodox pilgrims float to the Holy Sepulchre, to witness the Holy Fire, the symbol of the resurrection of Christ. By restricting the number of believers allowed to reach the site, Israel has decided to disrupt this millennia-old religious tradition, he said, adding that, a few days ago, Israeli occupying forces stormed the Aqsa Mosque compound/Haram al-Sharif, shooting at worshippers and desecrating the Mosque with military boots and violence. He pointed out that 200 Palestinians, including women and children were wounded and 400 arrested, yet Israel claims it is upholding the historic status quo, and resorted to its favourite one-size-fits-all justification: security.

Not only does Israel use security to justify killing Palestinian children on their way to school, it labels Palestinian worshippers as terrorists, he continued. Jewish extremists and settlers are not merely visiting Haram al-Sharif, he said, they are seeking a takeover. When Israeli forces provide them protection to enter the site, they do it knowingly, he said, adding that Israel hopes that the international community will forget that it has no rightful claim or sovereignty over any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, its Old City and its holy sites. Israel has no authority over Haram al-Sharif where the historic and legal status quo must be upheld, and the authority of the Islamic Waqf and the custodianship of Jordan must be respected, he stressed. “Make no mistake, Israel is not only attacking a Muslim holy site or a Christian holy site,” he said, adding that it is also targeting the Palestinian identity of the city.

Stressing that there can be no equation between a colonial power and a colonized people, he added that a rules-based multilateral order does not mean that one party gets to set the rules

while others must observe them. “The Palestinian people ask you: how come Israel gets away with murder, in broad daylight, while everyone is watching?”, he said. Even though international law is clear on how to end the occupation, the Israeli Prime Minister says no to a two-State solution and the Israeli Government continues expanding settlements and consolidating Palestinian Bantustans, he said. There is no international law-based order if there is no will to enforce the law on the ground, he emphasized. Noting that the Holy Fire manifests each year to celebrate resurrection, he added that Palestinians everywhere, every day, embody this holy fire, a light that cannot be extinguished.

GILAD MENASHE ERDAN (Israel), noting the convergence of Passover, Easter and Ramadan in 2022, said that what could have been an opportunity for peaceful coexistence was instead used by Palestinian extremists to incite violence. Hundreds of Palestinian terrorists on the Temple Mount posed a threat to both Muslim and Jewish worshippers, and Israeli police had to intervene. Recalling the international community’s call for “calm on both sides”, he stressed that this request is “completely detached from reality” and only serves to fan the flames of violence, promote radicalization and “reward the thugs inciting chaos”. It is ludicrous to place mobs of violent rioters on the same moral scale as a law-abiding democracy making every effort to keep the peace, and such a comparison plays directly into the web of lies spun by terror groups.

He went on to underscore that Israel always has and always will ensure the freedom of worship for all religions and is committed to protecting holy sites and the status quo. When violence endangers innocents and prevents the exercise of rights, however, Israel will not remain idle, and its police will act. The only ones breaking the status quo on the Temple Mount are Palestinian terror groups, and when the international community blindly accepts the narrative that Israel prevents Muslims from exercising their right to pray or uses excessive force, such groups’ actions only intensify. “Morally equating both sides must end,” he stressed.

Further, he pointed out that, while the Council continues to discuss Hamas’ lies, the true threat to regional security is growing. Hizbullah — the Iranian terror proxy — has grown into a terror army as a result of global carelessness. Since the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006), which calls for the establishment of an area free of armed personnel other than those of the Government of Lebanon and UNIFIL, Hizbullah has multiplied its arsenal in Lebanon tenfold and conducts attacks on Israeli civilians. If the international community does not act, he stressed, “the price of today’s neglect will be tomorrow’s destruction”. Hizbullah is one of six terror-proxy armies that Iran uses to spread death and chaos throughout the region, and he called on those present to imagine what the Middle East will look like when such armies can operate under a nuclear umbrella. Against this backdrop, Israel will not stand on the side lines, as it possesses the full freedom to act to defend its security and existence.

RICHARD MILLS, JR. (United States) expressed concern over recent violence in Jerusalem on Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, which should be a site of peace and tranquility. Appealing to all sides to exercise maximum restraint, avoid provocative actions and rhetoric, and

preserve the historic status quo, he urged Palestinian and Israeli officials to work cooperatively to lower tensions and ensure everyone's safety. The recent spate of violence only underscores the need to further expand dialogue and pursue paths to peace. He condemned the rocket launches from Gaza and Lebanon by militant groups that are seeking to exploit the situation in Jerusalem to advance their narrow interests, adding that the United States is engaged diplomatically with all sides. Due to the Russian Federation's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, food insecurity could worsen even further in the coming weeks, both in Gaza and the West Bank, as prices of food, fuel and other commodities rise. During the historic Negev Summit, leaders involved in normalization discussed how they can support Palestinians in concrete ways and have a positive impact on the daily lives of Palestinians. In that vein, he encouraged all Member States to provide concrete assistance, including financial contributions to UNRWA. Both Israelis and Palestinians are entitled to equal measures of security, freedom, opportunity and dignity. But, the realization of this vision will require good-faith efforts by the parties and the generous support of the international community. The United States remains firmly committed to a two-State solution, he emphasized.

MONA JUUL (Norway), calling on all parties to lower tensions, stressed that the integrity of the holy sites and the historic status quo in Jerusalem must be upheld and fully respected. Those with influence on the ground should have access to adequate channels of communication and dialogue between religious leaders should also resume. Condemning all acts of terrorism, including those recently seen in Tel Aviv and other places, as well as the firing of rockets from Gaza into southern Israel, she emphasized that the underlying causes of those challenges should not be overlooked, pointing to the Israeli occupation and settlement activity, as well as violence against civilians. "We need more long-term solutions, and most importantly a political horizon," she said, citing preliminary reports which indicated progress had been made in several of the priority projects defined in the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting in Oslo last November.

HAROLD ADLAI AGYEMAN (Ghana) said the recurrence of tensions and violence around the holy sites, resulting in casualties of both Palestinians and Israelis, raises serious concerns for stability in the Middle East region. He called for the preservation and continuing full respect of the historic and legal status quo of the holy sites to preserve the sanctity of the religious grounds, manage access, guarantee freedom of worship and ensure non-interference in the peaceful practice of the monolithic faiths of the Middle East. Welcoming the various efforts being made to achieve reconciliation between Israel and its Arab neighbours, he encouraged renewed efforts towards the realization of a two-State solution, with Israelis and Palestinians, living side by side within secure and recognized borders, and in peace, based on international law, the tenets of the Charter of the United Nations and the parameters set out in the numerous decisions of the Security Council.

MICHAEL KAPKIAI KIBOINO (Kenya), spotlighting on the need to safeguard the rights and security of both Palestinians and Israelis, said that strong condemnation must remain against those who call for the application of human rights and freedom, but still violate the same within

their own communities, among them being Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other affiliated militant groups. There is need to look deeper and address the mechanisms, and sources of weapons and funds that reinforce such activities, including the barrage of rocket attacks from Gaza, and the seventh of April terror attack in Tel Aviv, which Hamas was quick to welcome and glorify. No cause can justify the deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure. In addition, the right of self-determination of Palestinians is closely linked to the right of freedom for the exercise of religion. This interlinkage inevitably must form part of the underpinnings for lasting peace between the Israelis and Palestinians. The recent riots and aggressions in the Old City, and in and around the Holy Sites in Jerusalem, including the Aqsa Mosque compound are concerning. The agreed historic and legal status on Jerusalem must be respected and upheld by all parties.

VASSILY A. NEBENZIA (Russian Federation), expressing concern about the escalation of tensions, noted the need for restraint to prevent a repetition of the days of violence that took place in May 2021. Stressing that any actions that affect the historical and legal status quo of Jerusalem's holy sites are unacceptable, he expressed support for the stabilizing role of Jordan. Condemning Israel's aggressive settlement policy, he pointed to the construction of 1,270 settler housing units in 2021 in the West Bank and the settlement plans for the occupied Syrian Golan. Calling on Israel to resume the peace process within a universally recognized international framework, he pointed to his country's initiative to hold a ministerial meeting of the Middle East Quartet with key members of the League of Arab States. Expressing disappointment that colleagues in the Quartet were attempting to monopolize the process and impose economic peace on the Palestinians, he also condemned the attempt to blame the Russian Federation for the impending food crisis. Unilateral coercive measures are the root cause of that situation, he said, adding "our Western colleagues could easily solve this problem if they chose to".

GERALDINE BYRNE NASON (Ireland), expressing deep concern about the recent violence at the holy sites of Jerusalem, reiterated that the status quo at the holy sites must be upheld and respected, with full respect for Jordan's custodial role. Also voicing concern about the civilian deaths and injuries in recent weeks across the West Bank, she condemned terrorism and all attacks against innocent Israelis and Palestinians. "Resolving conflicts is not to give in to the terrorists; instead, it is to overcome the terrorists," she said, highlighting the need for a credible political horizon along with a security response. Unresolved conflicts are also inconsistent with and undermine international law, she noted, calling the Security Council's attention to illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Urging the Israeli authorities to address the settler violence comprehensively and without delay, she noted that her country is conscious of the mounting financial and interlinked humanitarian challenges faced by the Palestinian people. It will continue to provide support, she said, calling on States to also provide financial resources to enable the work of UNRWA.

SHERAZ GASRI (France), expressing concern over recent violence in Jerusalem, condemned terrorist attacks that claimed 14 lives in Israel and called for restraint and the

avoidance of all forms of provocation. The international community's collective priority should be preventing an escalation similar to that which occurred in May 2021. Respect for the status quo of holy sites is essential and any allegations of the disproportionate use of force must be investigated, but the root causes of conflict must also be addressed. France has warned since October 2021 that the resumption of settlement activities and evictions is exacerbating a difficult situation, and she called on Israel to end such activities. Further, she spotlighted the need to create a political horizon for the resumption of negotiations to implement a two-State solution; otherwise, "the same causes will produce the same effects and the cycle of violence will be repeated".

JOÃO GENÉSIO DE ALMEIDA FILHO ([Brazil](#)), noting that April encompasses important religious celebrations for the three major monotheistic faiths, said this makes the recent violence all the more regrettable as it is happening during a period to practise peace, tolerance and self-reflection. In this regard, he drew attention to initiatives such as the 2019 Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites and the 2020 Declaration on Safe Places of Worship of the International Freedom of Religion or Belief Alliance. Measures must be taken to prevent acts of provocation. In this context, he welcomed the engagement of Israeli authorities with parties on the ground to ease tensions, as well as Israeli assurances regarding the enduring historical and legal status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem, which must be preserved. As custodian of the Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem, Jordan is also an important partner in bringing this crisis to an end.

ALICIA GUADALUPE BUENROSTRO MASSIEU ([Mexico](#)) said attacks on churches, synagogues, mosques or any other places of worship are unjustifiable, deplored civilian casualties, including minors. She urged the Israeli security forces to exercise maximum restraint and respect the principle of proportionality, and also urged Israel to refrain from altering the demographic composition, institutional structure and the physical, cultural and historical characters of Jerusalem. Condemning the attacks against the Israeli population, as well as the launch of rockets from Gaza, she applauded the mediation efforts of Egypt, Jordan and Qatar to defuse tensions. Mexico supports a two-State solution in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. Responsibility for resuming the peace process rests unquestionably in Israel and Palestine, she said, adding that the international community and the Council have a responsibility to foster and facilitate this process.

RAVINDRA RAGUTTAHALLI ([India](#)), expressing concern about recent incidents in Jerusalem during the ongoing month of Ramzan, stressed that the historic status quo at holy sites, including Haram al-Sharif, must be respected and upheld. Yet, despite efforts to avert escalation, the on-ground situation has once again deteriorated, he noted, appealing to all parties to stop the provocations and incitement that could further worsen the situation. Voicing concern about the acts of terror and incidents of violence in Israel and the West Bank, he urged all sides to take immediate steps for a complete cessation of violence. The recent rocket fire from Gaza and the retaliatory air strikes by Israel demonstrate the fragility of the situation and possible potential for

escalation. Reiterating his country's financial commitment to supporting UNRWA to overcome the liquidity crisis, he noted that India has already contributed \$20 million over the last four years and has also pledged \$5 million for UNRWA's programme budget for the year 2022. He also called for the immediate resumption of peace talks between Israel and Palestine, stressing that the United Nations and the international community must prioritize the revival of such negotiations.

MOHAMED ISSA ABUSHAHAB (United Arab Emirates) condemned the repeated incursions by Israeli forces into the Aqsa Mosque compound, as well as the assaults carried out by settlers in the courtyards of Haram al-Sharif. Acknowledging recent steps taken by the Israeli Government to reduce tensions, he urged that similar steps be taken to create a stable and sustainable political environment and revive the Middle East peace process. In that regard, he commended efforts by Jordan, Egypt and the United States. The current situation demonstrates the need to ensure the protection of worshipers, while simultaneously refraining from any provocative actions in the Aqsa Mosque compound. The Israeli authorities must respect the right of Palestinians to practise their religious rites and to have free access to holy places, including the Aqsa Mosque and Ibrahimi Mosque. The existing legal and historical status quo of the city of Jerusalem and its sanctities, in line with international law, must be preserved, he said, underlining the need to avoid undermining the authority and powers of the Jerusalem Endowment Administration and the affairs of the Aqsa Mosque compound. He further emphasized the need to respect the role of the custodianship of Islamic and Christian holy sites and endowments, which is entrusted to Jordan.

MICHEL XAVIER BIANG (Gabon), expressing concern about the violence of the past few weeks in the Old City of Jerusalem and the large number of civilian victims, cautioned that this is destroying efforts to build trust between the parties, as a precondition for their dialogue. Rather than unilateral initiatives by the protagonists, the situation calls for good-faith, constructive dialogue. Stressing Jerusalem's importance to the common heritage of humankind and the peaceful coexistence of all religions, he voiced support for the appeal launched by the King of Morocco and Pope Francis. He also spotlighted the crucial role of the neighbouring countries, urging the Council to overcome the impasse in which it finds itself. Drawing attention to the illegal policy of settlement-expansion and the territorial fragmentation of the West Bank, he said the two-State solution cannot be achieved without political will from all the parties, as well as support from regional and international actors.

ZHANG JUN (China) noting the Israeli police's recent clashes with Palestinian people at the Aqsa Mosque compound and exchanges of rockets between the Gaza Strip and Israel, stressed that religious holidays should be an opportunity for peace, rather than a relapse into hostilities. If the security of one side is established at the cost of the other's, it will be impossible to break the cycle of violence. Thus, he called on all parties — particularly Israel — to exercise restraint and prevent further escalation, recalling that the occupying Power is obliged under international law to prevent security threats against Palestinian civilians. He went on to say that the question of Palestine lies at the heart of the Middle East issue, and regardless of international developments,

cannot be forgotten. A grand, fair plan to that end is not lacking; rather, it is the courage of action that is absent. The fundamental reason for continuing tension, he added, is that the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people have yet to be realized, as a two-State solution has not been achieved.

FERIT HOXHA ([Albania](#)) expressed regret that recent development on the ground shattered, once again, hopes that must be entertained to arrive at a point where just and lasting peace appears in the horizon. Deploring the fact that civilians remain targets of violence, he condemned terrorist acts in Israel. Acknowledging Israel's legitimate security concerns, he said terror has no place anywhere in the world. Holy places should not be targets of violence or vengeance but a place of veneration and reverence. Israel must show self-restraint, he said, and its response to terrorist acts must be firm, yet legally rooted, institutionally carried out and always proportionate. Israelis and Palestinians should enjoy equal rights and freedoms. When both sides come to the negotiation table, they make progress. In that regard, he wondered about the number of times a timid ray of hope has appeared and something dark and more powerful comes to brutally crash it, as if hope for the Middle East peace process were always in the wrong place. Extremists and their agendas should not be allowed to take a central place. To the contrary, hope, vision and rationality should be the ingredients to foment progress towards peace. There is no alternative to a situation where Israelis and Palestinians work and learn to live together by respecting each other's rights and aspirations, by sharing hope and the land they both identify with, he stressed.

BARBARA WOODWARD ([United Kingdom](#)), Council President for April, spotlighted the fragile conditions in Jerusalem, stressing it is crucial that all parties take urgent steps to reduce tensions. Maintaining the historic status quo is the only means of ensuring freedom of worship. Urging parties to ensure sensitive policing, she underscored that all religious sites must be treated with utmost respect. She expressed full support for Israel's right to ensure its security, unequivocally condemning rocket attacks against Israel by militants in Gaza. Likewise, she expressed concern over the number of Palestinians killed by Israel's security forces in recent weeks. She called for thorough and transparent investigations into the deaths of Palestinian civilians, and for restraint in the use of force. "It is not too late to reverse these trends," she emphasized, calling on the Council to do its utmost to prevent a return to the violence witnessed last May.

SUDQI ATALLAH ABD ALKADETR AL OMOUSH ([Jordan](#)), calling for international coordination to prevent alterations to the historic character of Jerusalem, added that the storming of the Aqsa Mosque compound by the Israeli army threatens to explode the brewing tensions. Israel must respect the legal and historical status quo of the site, he stressed, highlighting its historical Hashemite custodianship. The Jordanian Administration is the only entity authorized to manage the affairs of the Aqsa Mosque compound in its entirety, he said, calling for a genuine political solution that will fulfil the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. His country has engaged with Palestinians and various international actors, such as Israel and the United States

within the framework of Jordan's continued role in protecting holy sites, he said, demanding that Israel must allow free access to the Aqsa Mosque compound and lift the restrictive barriers. The custodianship is a duty and responsibility that his country will perform with all its strength, he said.

MOHAMMAD ALI JARDALI (Lebanon) said that his country will hold its parliamentary elections on 15 May, stressing that the Government is committed to guaranteeing a smooth electoral process. There is a record number of women candidates, which demonstrates the active role women are increasingly playing in Lebanon's political, economic and social life. The upcoming polls are important for creating political dynamism and momentum for an energized political life that brings reforms and breathes new life into the country. He welcomed the appointment of the new head of UNIFIL who took up his duties in February. UNIFIL has been invaluable for the stability, peace and security in the south of Lebanon. Its role in de-escalating and reducing tensions and in preventing any miscalculation or escalation along the Blue Line remains indispensable and is key in the context of the daily Israeli violations of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Expressing appreciation for UNIFIL's provision of additional non-lethal material and logistical support to the Lebanese Armed Forces, he said he had asked the Council in a 15 March letter that it consider extending this support for one more year.

OSAMA MAHMOUD ABDELKHALEK MAHMOUD (Egypt) pointed out that radical Jewish groups are storming into the Aqsa Mosque compound daily under the protection of Israeli occupying forces during Ramadan, which is reminiscent of the events of 2021 that led to hundreds of deaths and injuries. All parties must show restraint and fully protect Muslim worshippers, who must be allowed to practice their faith in the Mosque. Noting that continued attempts to "Judaize" East Jerusalem portend a dangerous escalation, he underscored the need to respect the status quo of holy sites in Jerusalem. Further, all unilateral measures in the West Bank must cease — namely, settlement-expansion, attempts to expel Palestinian families from the neighbourhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan and the demolition of Palestinian structures. For its part, Egypt has invested \$500 million in the Gaza Strip and continues to work with international and regional partners to ensure the resumption of negotiations towards a two-State solution. He added that his country also works to support political solutions for the situations in Yemen and Libya.

MOHAMED ENNADIR LARBAOUI (Algeria) observed that this meeting is happening prior to the seventy-fourth anniversary of Nakba. Over the past five decades, Israel has continued to deny the Palestinians' right to self-determination. The Council is meeting today as Israeli forces continue to attack innocent Palestinians and storm mosques, preventing Palestinians from practising a religion. Such despicable practices are dangerous to the region and pose a threat to regional peace and security. Inability to implement Council resolutions is allowing Israel to continue its illegal acts. Following Israel's recent violent attacks against Palestinians, Algeria's President, Abdelmadjid Tebboune, in his statement to the Secretary-General, stressed the need for the Council to fulfil its responsibility to end such attacks. In the face of such violations, the United Nations must respond firmly.

FERIDUN SINIRLOGLU (Turkey), noting that Ramadan is the holiest of months for Muslims in Palestine and around the world, said that a time that should be defined by peace was instead marred by violence. Regretting that civilians, including children, lost their lives due to the actions of the Israeli security forces, he said further threats must be stopped. The Israeli authority's decision to close the Aqsa Mosque compound to non-Muslims is a step in the right direction, he said, noting his Government's efforts to secure a common ground between various parties. Underscoring the importance of securing lasting peace and stability, he emphasized that there is no alternative to a two-State solution. Also highlighting the life-saving services offered by UNRWA, he pointed to Turkey's financial and political support for the Agency.

OMAR KADIRI (Morocco) said that recent events in the Aqsa Mosque compound represent serious provocations by Israel during this holy month. Escalating violence is the result of the impasse in the Middle East peace process, and he called for the avoidance of all actions that could lead to further tensions, as to do otherwise would fuel extremism, destabilize the region and widen the gap between Israelis and Palestinians. Noting that Morocco is committed to supporting the Palestinian cause, he said the Government works to ensure the protection of holy sites' historical and legal status and supports vital social, economic and health-care projects for the residents of Jerusalem. He added that Morocco will continue working with all parties to guarantee the conditions necessary to revitalize talks between Israel and Palestine, which is the only way to achieve peace and security in the Middle East.

BASSAM SABBAGH (Syria) condemning the barbaric attacks on worshippers at the Aqsa Mosque compound, stressed that the practices of the Israeli occupation authorities and settler groups are illegal and immoral. The dubious silence of the so-called international community and the unlimited support of the United States for the occupation and Judaization of Palestinian lands will not change the established facts of history, he said. Reiterating the call to grant Palestine full membership in the United Nations, he also noted the threat posed by Israel's actions to the security of his country and the region. Calling on the Security Council to enforce the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israel and Syria, he pointed to a series of repeated Israeli attacks on Syrian territory, the last of which occurred on 14 April, around the city of Damascus. Israeli measures aimed at changing the legal and demographic nature of the Golan, seizing land and property, looting natural resources and wealth, and implementing settlement plans are aimed at perpetuating the occupation and obliterating the Syrian identity of the occupied Syrian Golan, he said.

SILVIO GONZATO, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union, in its capacity as observer, expressed concern over the increasingly high number of casualties and recalled that the use of force must be a proportionate last resort to protect life when otherwise unavoidable. Urging both parties to demonstrate their stated commitment to a two-State solution through concrete action and avoid unilateral acts that threaten the same, he also called on all parties to take necessary steps to produce a fundamental change to the political, security and economic situation in the Gaza Strip while addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns.

Further, until a just, realistic solution to the refugee issue is found, UNRWA remains crucial for providing necessary protection and essential services to Palestinian refugees and for supporting peace and stability in the region. As such, he called on all partners to increase their contributions to the Agency.

Turning to the conflict in Syria, he stressed the need to ensure that the country's people are not forgotten amid other international crises. He called on all participants — particularly the Syrian regime — to engage in good faith in the political process with the aim of achieving meaningful progress on constitutional reform. Noting that continued hostilities across Syria render ordinary life impossible for the civilian population, he called for the implementation of a nationwide ceasefire, the protection of civilians and the cessation of attacks on civilian objects. Additionally, all parties to the conflict must cease indiscriminate air strikes and the shelling of civilians and humanitarian workers. He went on to call on such parties to allow rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access — including across conflict lines — to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches people in need through the most direct routes.

MAJID TAKHT RAVANCHI ([Iran](#)) said that the United Nations reports indicate that, in the first three months of 2022, the Israeli regime continued its oppressive and expansionist policies and unlawful criminal practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, killing innocent people including women and children, requisitioning Palestinian people's properties, seizure and demolition and forcible eviction of their homes. In addition, as a collective punishment against the innocent people of Gaza, the inhumane blockade continues. This is a crime against humanity, a violation of all international laws and norms, he said, stressing that any sacrilege and desecration of Muslim holy sites, and hurting the feelings of Muslims around the world, is repulsive and should not be tolerated. The Israeli regime also continues its destabilizing activities in the region by violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria and by threatening openly to use force against other regional countries. The conflict in Palestine can only be resolved if the occupation ends. This, however, will not be achieved so long as the Security Council's inaction remains an option. The atrocities against the Palestinian people are well-documented and regarded as war crimes under international law. Israel's representative has once again to make bogus claims against Iran, which he categorically rejected.

TAREK LADEB ([Tunisia](#)), condemning the profanation of the Aqsa Mosque compound during the month of Ramadan, urged the international community to shoulder its legal and moral responsibility to the Palestinians. Highlighting the excessive use of force against women and children, he added that the Palestinian issue has been on the table for seven decades, causing untold suffering. Also drawing attention to the repercussions of this crisis on regional stability, he said that the Quartet and the Council must make stronger efforts to resolve this issue. Noting the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Gaza, he called for more assistance to the Palestinian Authority.

SYED MOHAMAD HASRIN AIDID (Malaysia), noting escalating Israeli aggression against Palestinian civilians and worshippers — particularly around the Aqsa Mosque compound — condemned such unprovoked, unjustified attacks as “contemptuous to all humanity”. The principles of the United Nations Charter and international law must be consistently applied to all conflicts, and the international community cannot advocate for respecting human rights through a rules-based order while ignoring Israeli atrocities against Palestinians. Thus, he called on Member States to ensure Israel’s accountability for grave violations of human rights. He also called on the Council to intensify efforts to create the conditions necessary for peace talks between relevant parties. Every Palestinian is entitled to live in security, dignity and freedom. However, he pointed out that such people continue to live under brutal occupation, and their systematic oppression is equivalent to crimes of apartheid.

MAGED ABDELFATTAH ABDELAZIZ, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States, said a lack of international accountability is allowing Israel to continue its illegal activities. The League rejects Israel’s practices of changing the legal status quo of holy sites and condemns recent aggressions by Israel. Citing a lack of progress on the political horizon, he warned against escalating economic pressure on Palestine. The League calls for a relaunch of direct negotiations between the two sides and restoration of confidence in the United Nations and the peace process. As the Security Council devotes its attention to the recent development in Europe, the organ must also address the protracted conflict in the Middle East. The League urges the Security Council to protect Palestinians from the occupying forces and preserve the legal status quo of East Jerusalem, he said, calling for the Council to organize a field visit to East Jerusalem. The organ should also intensify efforts to help revive direct dialogue between the two parties and should support Palestinian refugees and UNRWA.

JOSÉ MANUEL RODRÍGUEZ CUADROS (Peru), expressing concern about the increasing tension and violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in Haram al-Sharif, condemned all such acts that violate Council resolutions. Underscoring the importance of respecting the historic and legal status quo of Christian and Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem, he also highlighted the crucial role of Jordan as custodian of the Aqsa Mosque compound. Jerusalem’s holy sites must not be profaned with violence, he said, calling for an independent investigation to compensate the victims and hold those responsible accountable. Also calling for an end to all settlement activities, as well as the rocket launches from Gaza, he noted that, in 2011, his country recognized the independence of the Palestinian State and established diplomatic relations with it.

TIYANI RAYMOND SITHOLE (South Africa), noting Palestinians’ observance of the holy month of Ramadan and Orthodox Easter, called on Israel to allow them their right to worship and gather for prayers in peace. The systematic subjugation that Palestinians endure under Israeli occupation is inhumane and in violation of fundamental human rights and internationally adopted norms and principles. “The scenes of Israeli brutality aimed at innocent, unarmed Palestinian civilians is a stark reminder to the world that, in Israeli society, some are more equal than others,”

he said. Expressing particular concern over the Palestinian youth languishing in prisons and detention centres, he spotlighted the impact such detentions will have on these individuals and recalled South Africa's youth held in detention while fighting for their fundamental rights. Israel's continued disregard of Council decisions reflects a blatant disregard for multilateralism and an international law-based order. He stressed that, for the international community to maintain credibility, there must be consistency in upholding the international rule of law.

ISHIKANE KIMIHIRO (Japan) expressing concern over the escalating violence between Israelis and Palestinians, stressed that the sanctity of holy places should be respected. The negative impact of the Russian aggression against Ukraine on global food security has added to the economic difficulties for the Palestinian people, he said, pointing to a significant rise in food prices recorded throughout the region. Noting that his country will address the global food security crisis through a joint Group of Seven effort, he highlighted that Japan will contribute \$3.35 million to UNRWA for humanitarian aid including food support. At \$50.5 million, Japan's total support for UNRWA in 2021 was the largest contribution over the past five years to the Agency, he said, calling for further international efforts, including by countries in the region, to implement pledges and make fresh contributions. Japan will also continue to provide assistance for Palestinian State-building efforts, he said, highlighting the Jericho Agro Industrial Park, which is a part of the flagship project of Japan's "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" initiative, as well as its Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development.

MOHAMMED ABDULAZIZ ALATEEK (Saudi Arabia), reaffirming his country's commitment to a two-State solution and the right of return of Palestinian refugees, he condemned the violence that took place in the prayer halls of the Aqsa Mosque compound during the sacred month of Ramadan. Calling on the international community to hold the Israeli authorities accountable for such aggression, he added that resolving the Palestinian crisis is crucial to enable the people of the entire region to achieve development. Underscoring the role of regional organizations such as the League of Arab States, as well as the Al-Quds Committee, he condemned the terrorist attacks conducted by the Houthi militia, with the support of Iran. His country has launched an initiative to support the Yemeni central bank, he said, also noting Saudi Arabia's support various development projects to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people.

IBRAHIM ZUHUREE (Maldives) expressed grave concern about the recent deterioration of the security situation in the Middle East, particularly regarding settler violence in the occupied Palestinian territories. Condemning the recent escalations of religious tensions in Haram al-Sharif and the Aqsa Mosque compound, he called for immediate de-escalation and maintenance of the historical status quo in the Old City of Jerusalem. He urged the Security Council to redouble its efforts to support the relaunch of the peace process, recalling resolutions 476 (1980) and 478 (1980) and resolution 2334 (2016). He also drew attention to the fact that the conflict in Syria has entered its eleventh year, with an estimated 14.6 million people in dire need of humanitarian aid. He called on the international community to undertake urgent efforts to ensure

that those people receive the required assistance and do not perish in refugee camps, especially women and children.

JAMAL FARES ALROWAIEI ([Bahrain](#)) called for an increase in collective efforts to lay the basis for peace, stability and security; to combat terrorism and its financing; and to bolster development cooperation in the region. For its part, Bahrain cooperates with friendly States to promote peace through the principles of dialogue and mutual coexistence, and these same principles are enshrined in Government policies and programmes. Condemning incursions by the Israeli police into the Aqsa Mosque compound, he stressed the importance of avoiding escalation, respecting holy sites and ensuring the freedom of worship for all religions. He also called on the international community to assume its responsibility to de-escalate the situation and open new horizons for peace based on a two-State solution. He went on to welcome a proposed one-month truce in Yemen and supported the Presidential Council's efforts to manage the State, accomplish the transitional period and end the crisis in Yemen through a political solution.

MUNIR AKRAM ([Pakistan](#)) said reports of Israeli forces' raid and use of tear gas by drones against innocent worshippers in the Aqsa Mosque compound, especially during the holy month of Ramadan, must be condemned. These assaults are egregious violations of humanitarian norms and human rights laws. There is no question in anyone's mind that Israel's actions in the occupied Palestinian lands are all grave violations of Security Council resolutions and international law, including humanitarian law. In addition, there is no moral, legal or political equivalence between Israel, the occupying State, and the occupied and oppressed Palestinian people. The perpetuation of Israeli occupation will not bring peace to the holy land. The two-State formula is the only solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

ALYA AHMED SAIF AL-THANI ([Qatar](#)), stressing that the aggressive actions of the Israeli forces in the Aqsa Mosque compound are violations of international law, said that they also comprise an attack on the religious feelings of millions of Muslims, during the holy month of Ramadan. This is the natural outcome of impunity, she said, condemning all attempts to distort the historic and legal status of Muslim and Christian holy sites. Highlighting the guardianship role of Jordan, she called for an end to the annexation of Palestinian territories, the destruction of Palestinian houses and the arbitrary arrests. Highlighting her Government's support for UNRWA, as well as for development and construction activities in Palestinian territories, she reaffirmed her country's support for an independent Palestinian State.

JOAQUÍN ALBERTO PÉREZ AYESTARÁN ([Venezuela](#)) spotlighted the excessive, unnecessary and indiscriminate use of force against Palestinian civilians, along with acts of vandalism against holy sites in East Jerusalem, including the Aqsa Mosque compound. He condemned these Israeli attacks and said that country is using the fact that the international community's attention is currently focused on other conflicts to step up its brutal aggression against Palestine. He went on to say that the United States continues to paralyse the Council's ability to act on this issue, which is not surprising as "double standards characterize those who

present themselves as champions of liberty, human rights and a supposed rules-based system". According to this racist vision, the suffering of people apparently varies based on the geographic location of the conflict. Against that backdrop, he stressed that the Council must end the impunity perpetuated by the Government of one of its permanent members, which ultimately encourages the daily crimes committed by Israel.

BADER A. ALMUNAYEKH (Kuwait), expressing concern about the crimes and aggression perpetrated by Israel, said the escalation of violence in the last couple of days undermines freedom of worship in the Aqsa Mosque compound and provokes the feelings of Muslims around the world. The latest violence is a link in a long chain of Israel's violations of international law and Council resolutions, he said, calling on the international community to hold that country accountable. Stressing the need for collective efforts to de-escalate tension and revive the Middle East peace process, he added that the recent aggression demonstrates that Israel does not desire peace. The Arab position is based on peace as a strategy, he said, reaffirming support for the legitimate political rights of Palestinians.

BAE JONGIN (Republic of Korea), noting that one year has passed since the May 2021 conflict between Israel and Palestine that resulted in hundreds of civilian casualties, called on all sides to refrain from actions that escalate tensions, particularly at this time of heightened sensitivity. He welcomed, however, confidence-building measures between Israel and Palestine, including the issuance of identification documents for the reunion of Palestinians. He went on to express concern over the possible deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip due to rising food and energy prices, and supported efforts to meet the Palestinian people's humanitarian and development needs. Turning to the situation in Yemen, he welcomed agreement on a truce and the establishment of the Yemeni Presidential Leadership Council, while noting that his country will provide \$20 million in humanitarian assistance in 2022 for Yemen.

MOHAMMAD KURNIADI KOBA (Indonesia) calling on Israel to respect international law, said that Jerusalem should be a city of tolerance and mutual respect. Stressing the importance of preventing the situation from worsening, he called on all parties to act with restraint. Illegal occupation and territorial expansion by a United Nations Member State is a breach of international law, whether in the Middle East or elsewhere, he said, calling on the international community to take action accordingly. The Council must not lose sight of the plight of the Palestinian people, he said, adding that the international community must show the same determination to resolve the Palestinian issue as it has shown in Ukraine.

NEVILLE MELVIN GERTZE (Namibia), Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, said that the core problem is well-known: namely, Israel's ongoing occupation of Palestinian territory and continuous human rights violations against Palestinian civilians. Expressing concern over the situation in Jerusalem, he called on political, religious and community leaders to help restore calm and on Israel to uphold and respect the historic status quo of holy sites and its obligations under international

humanitarian law. He went on to stress that “the Israeli occupation is the main driver of human rights violations and conflict in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”, and that the international community — and the Council in particular — must play a decisive role in resolving this conflict. New global crises should not divert attention from the grave situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, he added, where Israel promotes policies and practices that are turning into a de facto annexation with different — and discriminatory — rights and legal systems applying to the population under its control.

MOHAMED AL HASSAN ([Oman](#)) called for a more effective international role to end the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, in line with various Council resolutions. Voicing concern about the deteriorating security condition caused by unjustified Israeli aggression, he stressed that attacking unarmed worshippers is a blatant violation of international law. Expressing condolences to the families of victims, he reaffirmed his country’s support for an independent Palestinian State, with pre-1967 borders and East Jerusalem as its capital. Calling on the Council to live up to its responsibilities, he added that it is high time to put an end to occupation.

YUSNIER ROMERO PUENTES ([Cuba](#)), aligning himself with the Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, spotlighted daily news confirming Israel’s consolidating annexation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It is regrettable that the Council has been unable to adopt measures to end Israeli occupation, and that the United States continues to prevent a broad, fair and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. That country’s repeated obstruction of Council action grants impunity to Israel and prevents the organ from fulfilling its responsibility to maintain international peace and security. Further, the United States’ unilateral decisions to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, to establish diplomatic relations in that city and to recognize Israel’s sovereignty over the Syrian Golan violate the Charter of the United Nations, international law and Council resolutions. He added that the United States’ aggressive, unilateral and unjustified actions in the Middle East continue to jeopardize the legitimate interests of Arab nations.



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