



# General Assembly

Tenth Emergency Special session

**41**<sup>st</sup> plenary meeting  
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New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Francis . . . . . (Trinidad and Tobago)

*The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.*

## Agenda item 5 (continued)

### Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

#### Draft resolution (A/ES-10/L.25)

#### Draft amendment (A/ES-10/L.26)

**The President:** In the light of the decision taken by the General Assembly earlier today to suspend the debate on the agenda item until this afternoon, the Assembly shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25 and draft amendment A/ES-10/L.26.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Nakano** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25: Azerbaijan, the Bahamas, Chad, China, the Gambia, Timor-Leste and Uganda.

I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft amendment A/ES-10/L.26: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Marshall Islands,

the Federated States of Micronesia, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tonga, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

**The President:** The Assembly will now proceed to take action on the draft resolution contained in document A/ES-10/L.25 and the draft amendment thereto, contained in document A/ES-10/L.26.

Delegations wishing to make a statement in explanation of vote before the vote on any of the proposals under this item, including the proposed amendment, are invited to do so now in one intervention. Before giving the floor for explanations of vote before the vote, I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Hmoud** (Jordan): I stand before the General Assembly today with a profound sense of duty as I present draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25, entitled "Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations", on behalf of the Group of Arab States. The draft resolution is brought forward under agenda item 5 of the tenth emergency special session, addressing illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory. It has garnered the co-sponsorship of 47 Member States of the General Assembly.

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The situation in Gaza is dire and is characterized by immeasurable suffering, and the fundamental human rights and dignity of its people have been violated in blatant disregard of international law. The consequences of indiscriminate violence, the loss of countless innocent lives and the extensive destruction of civil infrastructure are destined to leave a lasting mark on generations to come. Since the eruption of this cycle of violence and conflict on 7 October, more than 7,000 innocent Palestinians have tragically lost their lives, including women, children, elderly persons, health workers and United Nations staff members. The urgent need for an immediate ceasefire to end this prolonged tragedy and create a path towards diplomatic solutions cannot be overstated. It is not merely our responsibility, but a profound moral obligation to champion the cause of peace.

In the light of these compelling circumstances, as we are all witnessing a ground invasion conducted by Israel as we speak and the absence of resolute action by the Security Council four times thus far, our draft resolution pursues a simple yet vital goal and one that aligns with the very purpose for which the United Nations was established — peace and compliance with international law. This draft resolution addresses the intensifying violence in the Gaza Strip and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. It calls for an immediate, enduring and unwavering humanitarian truce, ultimately leading to a cessation of hostilities. It demands adherence to international law, especially concerning the safeguarding of civilians, humanitarian personnel, United Nations staff members and essential facilities. This draft resolution emphasizes the crucial necessity of unimpeded humanitarian access to life-saving essentials such as food, water, medical supplies, fuel and electricity for the civilian population in Gaza. Moreover, it pleads for the immediate and unconditional release of captives and underscores the imperative of protecting civilians and humanitarian infrastructure and the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on vulnerable groups, encompassing women, children, individuals with disabilities and the elderly. Furthermore, the draft resolution underscores that the only viable path forward is a two-State solution, rooted in the pertinent United Nations resolutions and international law. In a time of crisis and uncertainty, this path offers hope for a just and lasting peace.

Lastly, I would like to remind delegations that Israel is responsible for the atrocities that are being committed now and that will be committed in their

ground invasion of Gaza. Do not support any effort to legitimize such atrocities, as we are seeing now in a proposal that seeks to whitewash the unlawful and horrendous aggression against the Palestinian people in Gaza. In that context, I call for a vote on Canada's draft amendment (A/ES-10/L.26).

**Mr. Rae (Canada):** We meet here today to take action and to show the people of Gaza and the people of Israel that we see their plight, the devastation they are facing and the need to find ways to get more urgent help to them, given the gravity of their despair, and deal with the causes of that despair. Any life lost is a tragedy. There is no hierarchy of death. Yet the critical reason for how we got here has already been forgotten by so many, as if it never happened. Just two weeks ago, Hamas terrorists killed more than 1,400 Israelis — not even mentioned in the comments by my colleague from Jordan — with their own hands and weapons and wreaked sheer terror on the people of Israel. The ongoing threats of Hamas, Iran, its proxy Hizbullah and others continue to hang over the entire region.

Since that day, 7 October, more than 7,000 Palestinians — and just three days ago, when I spoke to the Security Council, it was more than 5,000, so we can see the need for a rapid response from the Organization to deal with the humanitarian crisis — who have been living under Hamas's tyranny, have been killed, and over a million are displaced. That is what has prompted this emergency special session.

*(spoke in French)*

We acknowledge the considerable efforts undertaken by the drafters to take into account the comments, and we are grateful for those efforts, which have certainly made it possible to improve the text considerably. Unfortunately, Canada cannot support the text as it is currently proposed. We cannot act as the General Assembly without acknowledging the terrible events of 7 October and without condemning the terrorists who are responsible for them. That is why Canada is presenting an amendment to the draft resolution, presented here with a view to condemning the terrorist attacks of 7 October carried out by Hamas and the hostage taking, which continues. If the draft amendment is not adopted, not only would the Security Council not have acted following the violence, but the Assembly would be adopting a draft resolution that makes no mention at all of the organization responsible for one of the worst terrorist attacks in history, and we

will all have to live with that failure while the tragedy continues to unfold.

*(spoke in English)*

The purpose of this draft amendment is quite straightforward. It is not by any means a whitewash of anybody. Facts are facts — on 7 October, Hamas committed acts of terror by killing and kidnapping innocent men, women and children. We, in the Assembly, have an obligation to name two things not mentioned in the draft resolution: the organization that bears responsibility for those events and its consequences, and the deliberate cruelty of the murders and the hostage taking that is still under way. Our draft amendment does just that — no more and no less.

The actions of a terrorist organization are not to be confused with the will of the Palestinian people. Nothing and no one can justify the terror that Hamas has unleashed. We continue to call for the immediate release of hostages and demand that they and all civilians be treated with compassion and humanity. Forty-one Member States have nationals being held hostage. What is undeniably an ongoing war crime has to be brought to an end.

We all understand in this Hall that war has rules. We share a common obligation to protect civilians, respect international humanitarian law and ensure that aid workers are safeguarded in all circumstances. The civilian deaths in Gaza, including of employees of the United Nations itself, are tragically and unacceptably high, and we urge for the steps required to be taken to deal with the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation. Ensuring unimpeded access to assistance is essential, which is why we specifically endorse the need for humanitarian pauses. We commend the efforts of the United States, Egypt and Israel to allow the first deliveries of humanitarian assistance through the Rafah border crossing. That has been a positive first step, but much more is required, and much more needs to be done.

To date, Canada has committed \$60 million in humanitarian assistance to go to trusted United Nations and Red Cross partners, who will help address the immediate needs on the ground. We will continue to ensure that our support helps to provide food, water and other life-saving assistance to those who need it most.

As we look at the region in its entirety, it is crucial to ensure that the violence we are witnessing in Israel and Gaza does not spread further to the West Bank or elsewhere. The fragile situation along Israel's northern

border with Lebanon is concerning to all of us and, more than ever, regional escalation remains a real threat. It is our hope that neighbouring countries are not brought even deeper into this conflict.

To be clear, Canada supports the right of Israelis and Palestinians to live side by side in peace and security. Key steps must be taken to ensure that we take that path. And ending this terrorist attack — after we have had the courage to name it — and ending the power of terrorist organizations in the region has to be one of the steps that we can all agree needs to be taken. That is why I am urging the entire General Assembly to support the draft amendment, which brings balance to draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25 and names what must be named. What we are proposing is factual and fair. If adopted, our draft amendment would enable many Member States, including Canada, to support the text of the draft resolution as a whole.

**Mr. Akram** (Pakistan): The text that has been proposed by the Arab and Islamic countries — draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25 — is a humanitarian text. It seeks three simple things: first, an immediate cessation of hostilities, namely, a ceasefire; secondly, the provision of urgent humanitarian relief to the besieged people of Gaza; and thirdly, a stipulation against the further displacement of the 2 million people in Gaza trapped between Israel's bombs and tanks. The co-sponsors of the draft resolution were circumspect in the language they used in the text. It does not condemn Israel by name, which was a deliberate act of moderation on the part of the sponsors — because when we look at the situation on the ground, we can see that Israel has been bombing the helpless Palestinian people for 20 days; Israel has killed 7,000 people — half of them children — in the past 20 days and 17,000 injured others; and 1.1 million Palestinians have been displaced.

Given the enormous gravity of the crimes that Israel is committing against the Palestinian people, it is amazing that, while my friend from Canada insists on naming Hamas, he does not feel the need to apply the equity, balance and fairness for which Canada is so well known. He does not feel the need to name Israel for killing several thousand Palestinians and injuring 17,000 — naming only Hamas. Is that balance? He says what needs to be named has to be named. We believe that Israel needs to be named. Blaming one side and not the other is not being fair, equitable and just.

And if we go back to the issue of who started this — we all know who started this. A 50-year-

long Israeli occupation and the murder and killing of Palestinians with impunity started this. When people are pushed into a corner, they will respond. As the Secretary-General said, this did not happen in a vacuum. The reaction of the representative of Israel in which he insulted the Secretary-General and called for his resignation shows us that it cannot face the truth, justice and the fact that the crime originated with the Israelis. The Israeli occupation is the original sin in this case. What happened on 7 October was the proximate cause, but the real cause is the occupation of Palestine.

It was not our purpose to name anybody in this text. My colleague from Canada said that it did not speak of the hostages. But the text does call in balanced terms for the release of all who are held against their will. It speaks not only of the Israeli hostages, but also the Palestinians. They have the same rights. They are human beings too. One must not focus only on their kith and kin in Israel and forget the Palestinians because they are different or seen as people of a lesser God. I think if Canada were truly fair and equitable, it would agree either to name everybody — both sides that are guilty of having committed crimes — or it would not name either of them, just as we chose not to name anybody in the draft resolution.

If the Canadian draft amendment (A/ES-10/L.26) is adopted, Pakistan will withdraw its co-sponsorship of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25 and submit a draft amendment to the text of the draft resolution strongly condemning all indiscriminate attacks by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian civilian population. I hope we will have the opportunity at the appropriate time to do so, but my appeal to all Member States here is that they not support the one-sided Canadian draft amendment — the unequal Canadian draft amendment, the unfair Canadian draft amendment. We urge Member States not to show that they are biased against the Palestinian people, who have suffered 50 years of occupation, that they are even-handed, that they will either name both or name neither in this draft resolution. Our purpose is to stop the fighting. The fact that today we have reports that the Israelis have gone on the ground into Gaza, which will escalate the fighting, is all the more reason for the General Assembly to adopt a draft resolution that is unequivocal in calling for a halt to the fighting and to the hostilities. And that is what we must do this afternoon.

**The President:** We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

As decided this morning, I wish to recall that a two thirds majority of the members present and voting is required for the adoption of the draft resolution and any amendments thereto.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25, entitled “Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations”.

In connection with the draft resolution, the General Assembly has before it a draft amendment, circulated in document A/ES-10/L.26. In accordance with rule 90 of the rules of procedure, the Assembly shall first take a decision on the draft amendment.

A recorded vote has been requested.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kiribati, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Myanmar, Nauru, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay

*Against:*

Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brunei Darussalam, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Comoros, Congo, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, Gambia, Guinea, Guyana, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, Niger, Oman, Pakistan,



Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen, Zimbabwe

*Abstaining:*

Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Botswana, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Jamaica, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Serbia, Suriname, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago

*Draft amendment A/ES-10/L.26 was rejected by 88 votes to 55, with 23 abstentions.*

**The President:** Since draft amendment A/ES-10/L.26 is not adopted, we shall proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25 entitled "Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations".

A recorded vote has been requested.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, France, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway,

Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe

*Against:*

Austria, Croatia, Czechia, Fiji, Guatemala, Hungary, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Tonga, United States of America

*Abstaining:*

Albania, Australia, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Iceland, India, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Kiribati, Latvia, Lithuania, Monaco, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), North Macedonia, Palau, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, South Sudan, Sweden, Tunisia, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Zambia

*Draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25 was adopted by 120 votes to 14, with 45 abstentions (resolution ES-10/21)*

[Subsequently, the delegations of Jamaica and Iraq informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

**The President:** Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote after the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Valtýsson** (Iceland): We are convened in this emergency special session meeting against the backdrop of another great tragedy for millions of Israelis and Palestinians and a disappointing impasse in the Security Council.

Iceland supported the draft amendment proposed by Canada (A/ES-10/L.26), which would have added some much-needed context and balance to resolution ES-10/21. Iceland regrets that the draft amendment was not adopted. Without the inclusion of those

essential elements, Iceland decided to abstain in the voting on the resolution, introduced by Jordan, despite supporting many of its key elements, notably on the humanitarian front. It is unfortunate that consensus could not be reached on a resolution to address the grave humanitarian situation and the need for concrete action to protect civilians and facilitate the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Iceland joins the calls for a humanitarian pause to facilitate the safe delivery of humanitarian aid throughout Gaza. Safe and unimpeded humanitarian access must be ensured. Civilians and civilian objects, medical personnel and humanitarian workers and assets must be protected.

We deplore the immense suffering of innocent civilians and the thousands of people — including women, children and United Nations personnel — who have been killed. We are alarmed by the impact of mass evacuations of civilians in Gaza. We must prevent further escalation for the sake of Israelis, Palestinians and the wider region. Across the world, the continuous violence is fuming the flames of hate, antisemitism, Islamophobia and racism.

Iceland is grateful to the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts to ensure the urgent delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance to the civilian population of Gaza. We echo his calls for humanitarian aid to the civilian population of Gaza so desperately in need of food, water, shelter and medical care. We welcome the opening of the Rafah crossing and commend the humanitarian personnel working night and day to facilitate the urgent delivery of humanitarian assistance. More aid is needed, and it is needed now. Time is running out.

Iceland has responded to United Nations emergency appeals with an additional contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), our long-standing humanitarian partner and the lead United Nations agency mandated with supporting Palestine refugees. We urge other donors to step up their support to UNRWA's critical front-line delivery of aid to the people of Gaza.

In conclusion, we must break out of the vicious cycle of violence and work towards a sustainable political solution. The international parameters for a long-term, sustainable solution to the conflict are clear: a two-State solution, based on international law, with

Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security and mutual recognition. Even in the midst of crisis, we must not give in to violence and hate. We must not lose hope, even when peace seems unrealistic and distant. We must put the peace process back on track. Otherwise, we run the risk of perpetuating the cycle of violence and humanitarian conditions deteriorating even further to the detriment of everyone.

**The President:** I would prevail upon delegations to keep their seats so that they may listen to speakers delivering their statements. We are still in the midst of the debate. I thank members for their cooperation.

**Mr. Szczerski (Poland):** Multilateralism has always been the foundation of Poland's activity at the United Nations, and our actions have been guided by the principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations. Therefore, we fully support all international efforts aimed at restoring peace.

Poland follows with great concern the current devastating crisis in the Middle East. We know very well the consequences of war, invasion and terror, which are felt for generations. Now, at this critical time, we should make every effort to reach a cessation of hostilities and return to a diplomatic path to settle this dispute.

Poland decided to abstain in the voting on the resolution (resolution ES-10/21), as we believe that the path to peace requires including several key elements missing in the text.

First, the resolution lacks a clear condemnation of the Hamas attack of 7 October. Terrorism aimed at the civilian population cannot be tolerated under any circumstances. That is why Poland condemned the brutal attacks on civilians carried out by Hamas at its very onset.

Secondly, it should be stated clearly that Israel — just as any other State — has the right to defend itself and its citizens in compliance with international law and international humanitarian law.

Thirdly and lastly, we also join all those calling for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages taken by Hamas. Among them is a Polish citizen — a distinguished historian working for the Yad Vashem Institute. We expect Mr. Alex Dancyg to return home safe and sound.

Nevertheless, we largely agree with the humanitarian provisions of the resolution. For decades, Poland has

been involved in humanitarian and development aid projects in the Middle East, with particular focus on Palestine and Lebanon. Poland's yearly contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which we have decided to supplement with a fresh 1 million Polish złoty, are clear proof of our wider political commitment to the stabilization of the Middle East.

In that context, we were satisfied to see the opening of the Rafah crossing last week and the first convoys of aid trucks entering Gaza. However, the flow of humanitarian aid into the Strip must continue and increase. We strongly believe that the lives of civilians on both sides must be protected in accordance with international law and international humanitarian law. The near-complete blockade of the Gaza Strip, which hinders imports of food, water, medicine and electricity, must end immediately. The strategy of collective punishment that puts civilians at risk is a wrong one.

We should make every effort to reach a cessation of hostilities and return to a diplomatic path to settle the dispute. We fully believe that, within the United Nations, we — the international community — should be able to develop a common position on this extremely important issue. Otherwise, the escalation and spread of the conflict may have devastating and long-lasting consequences. In that vein, Poland remains open to constructive cooperation and committed to a negotiated and viable two-State solution built upon the internationally agreed parameters.

**Mr. Kridelka** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium voted in favour of the resolution (resolution ES-10/21), but we deeply regret that certain fundamental elements that we had put forward are not included in the final text. The reasons that we voted in favour are nevertheless numerous.

First, humanitarian access to Gaza must be guaranteed and obstacles in all forms lifted. Belgium, alongside the rest of the European Union, supports the establishment of humanitarian pauses and corridors in the hope that those can lead to humanitarian ceasefires in response to appeals from the United Nations. That is the main reason for our vote.

Secondly, it is well known that our international action is based on respect for international law and inter-national humanitarian law, whether on such a particularly complex and emotional issue as this or on others. As the Secretary-General quite rightly

reminded us, even wars have rules. We therefore wanted to express our support for the overall goals of the text, although we are well aware of its shortcomings.

Thirdly, the protection of all civilians must be our primary concern, and they must be the focus of increased efforts on our part, even if it remains the primary responsibility of the parties to the conflict. In that regard, I wish to recall that Belgium does not support attempts at a total blockade, forced displacement or the use of civilians as human shields, whether it be in this situation or in any other situation.

Fourthly, nonetheless, Belgium deplores the fact that the resolution, which we consider to be primarily humanitarian in nature, has not taken into account the following elements — a clear condemnation of the reprehensible terrorist attacks perpetrated in Israel by Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad; that terrorism must be fought in all circumstances and that such acts must not be met with silence; and that there should have been more explicit condemnation at the Security Council. Since that was not the case, the resolution could have denounced the attacks more clearly. They will be the focus of greater attention on our part.

Belgium also calls for the unconditional and immediate release of all hostages. Such an act, which is at odds with international humanitarian law, could have been addressed more explicitly. I commend those who are currently working to release the hundreds of innocents currently being detained by terrorist groups.

Belgium unequivocally recognizes the right of Israel to defend itself. That incontestable right under international law, which must be enjoyed with respect for international humanitarian law, should also have been explicitly mentioned.

In conclusion, I would like to recall that Belgium does not believe that the security of Israel and the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people are mutually exclusive — quite the opposite. The current situation once again shows the absolute need to define a political horizon towards a viable and sustained solution to this conflict. A political horizon would guarantee Israel the possibility to live in peace and security and allow Palestinians to enjoy their right to self-determination. We must therefore create the right conditions than can lead to a negotiated solution. That is the very reason for the Peace Day Effort, which has the full support of my country, Belgium.

Diplomatic efforts must now be focused on de-escalating tensions so as to avoid further human suffering. Belgium commends and supports all constructive efforts to prevent further deterioration of the situation in the region. That is why the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium is currently in the Middle East and increasing his contacts so that he can hear what the region has to say. We are conveying a message about dialogue — which requires truth — peace and respect for international law.

**Mr. De Rivière** (France) (*spoke in French*): France voted in favour of resolution ES-10/21, introduced by Jordan on behalf of the Group of Arab States, because nothing can justify the suffering of civilians. All of the victims deserve our compassion, and all lives are equally valuable. There is no hierarchy.

We must work collectively to establish a humanitarian truce, which could lead eventually to a ceasefire, because the situation in Gaza is catastrophic. We must guarantee safe, rapid, unhindered and sustained humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip. That is why President Emmanuel Macron launched an appeal today to form a humanitarian coalition for Gaza, and why France has sent a new aircraft carrying humanitarian aid for the population of Gaza.

Nonetheless, France deplores the fact that several essential elements are missing from the text — first and foremost condemnation of the terrorist attack carried out by Hamas and other terrorist groups against Israel. The Assembly must also call for the release of the hostages. Many countries here have already been victims of such indiscriminate terrorism. France is one of them.

I also recall that Hamas does not represent its population — quite the opposite. It is a catastrophe for Palestinians' aspirations for a State if it abandons them by committing such abject acts. Israel has the right to defend itself and a duty to do so while respecting international law, in particular international humanitarian law. It therefore has a duty to protect civilians. France underscores that the adoption of this text cannot replace the efforts of the Security Council and the decisions that the Council must now take.

We have the duty to prevent a deterioration of the situation in the entire region. France is committed to preventing an expansion of the conflict. Lastly, we must take action to recreate the conditions for a political solution that meets the legitimate aspirations of Palestinians and Israelis to live in peace. The

conditions of that lasting peace are well known. They are indispensable guarantees for Israel to ensure its security and for Palestinians to have a State. The only viable solution is the two-State solution. That is why France voted in favour of the draft resolutions submitted by Brazil (S/2023/773) and the United States (S/2023/792) in the Security Council. We hope that the Security Council will adopt a just decision, based on our common principles, as soon as possible.

**Ms. Brandt** (Kingdom of the Netherlands): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening the emergency special session and for recognizing that these are extraordinarily trying times.

We are shocked by the number of innocent lives lost and the suffering of many more people. Every civilian life is valuable, and each civilian casualty is one too many. Our thoughts are with all the victims — Israeli and Palestinian alike — and their families.

None of us can even imagine the scale of the humanitarian challenge in Gaza. There is an urgent need to secure safe and unhindered humanitarian access. Food, water and fuel, including for hospital generators, must be allowed in immediately, as well as medicines for the many who desperately need them. Humanitarian pauses in the fighting are urgently needed to make that possible and to save lives. And funding is needed, as also follows from the United Nations urgent appeal for more international assistance. The Kingdom of the Netherlands has already stepped up its humanitarian response. We immediately committed an additional €25 million for urgent humanitarian relief, €8 million of which is for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and comes on top of our annual contribution of €19 million.

We would also like to pay tribute to United Nations staff and all humanitarian workers who continue to do their work under extremely difficult circumstances and to offer condolences for the staff who lost their lives while doing so. We all need to work to prevent the conflict from spreading even further, and we call for restraint by all parties. This is not a time to pour fuel on the fire.

We are also worried about the situation in the occupied West Bank, where settler violence is aggravating an already tense situation. The Palestinian Authority is working to maintain stability and deserves our full support.



We are grateful to Jordan for its efforts in introducing a resolution (resolution ES-10/21) that gives voice to so many of the grave concerns shared by us all. We welcome the strong condemnation of all acts of violence against Palestinian and Israeli civilians, the call for immediate humanitarian access, the demands for the provision of essential goods and services to civilians throughout the Gaza Strip, as well as the demand that all parties comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Those messages have our full and strong support.

Still, we decided to abstain in the voting on the resolution because, in our view, important elements are missing from the text. First following the terrorist attack by Hamas, we support Israel's right to defend itself — a right that needs to be exercised in line with the principles of proportionality and necessity. Secondly, the immediate release of all hostages is of the utmost priority and is insufficiently reflected in the resolution. Furthermore, we prefer to look at existing United Nations mechanisms first rather than call for the creation of a new mechanism to ensure the protection of the civilian population.

The mere thought of the situation spiralling further out of control is frightening. We must urgently address the humanitarian needs. We must urgently break the cycle of violence. And we cannot give up on peace and on the two-State solution. We all know that a common perspective on sustainable peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians alike is the only way forward.

**Ms. Stoeva** (Bulgaria): Bulgaria is gravely concerned about the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza and calls for continued, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and aid to reach those in need through all necessary measures, including humanitarian corridors and pauses to meet humanitarian needs. We underline the importance of ensuring the protection of all civilians at all times in line with international humanitarian law and deplore the loss of life of all civilians. However, we must also recognize that the heinous and indiscriminate terrorist attacks of Hamas across Israel, which we condemn in the possible strongest terms, brought unimaginable suffering to civilians. The use of civilians as human shields by Hamas is a deplorable atrocity. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. There is no justification for terror, and Israel has the inherent right to defend itself in accordance with international law and international humanitarian law.

Unfortunately, the resolution (resolution ES-10/21) that was just adopted falls short of recognizing that, and for those reasons Bulgaria abstained in the voting on it. The priority now is to prevent further escalation of the conflict. The international community should invest more efforts in creating a real political horizon for a solution through intensive outreach and clear messages. We remain committed to a lasting and sustainable peace based on a two-State solution and the relevant Security Council resolutions. It must be made clear that there cannot be a military solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The only way towards a just and sustainable peace is returning to the peace process and taking it forward.

**Ms. Brattested** (Norway): Norway voted in favour of the resolution (resolution ES-10/21) just adopted. We commend the Group of Arab States for its efforts to act in good faith and search for a compromise on some of the most sensitive issues. We would like to highlight two important elements that we wanted to have included in the resolution.

First, Norway voted in favour of the draft amendment (A/ES-10/L.26) introduced by Canada. We regret that the draft amendment was not adopted as part of the resolution. Norway has unequivocally and strongly condemned the terror attacks by Hamas in Israel on 7 October. We have also condemned the taking of hostages, and we demand their immediate and unconditional release.

Secondly, we would like to reiterate that Israel has the right to defend itself against armed attacks by Hamas. We emphasize, in that regard, that self-defence measures must be necessary and proportionate.

Despite the shortcomings, Norway decided to vote in favour of the resolution in its entirety. That decision was made in the light of the gravity of the situation on the ground, in particular regarding the humanitarian catastrophe that we see evolving in Gaza, as well as the importance of advancing a joint international message at this critical juncture.

**Mr. Erdan** (Israel): Today is a day that will go down in infamy. We have all witnessed that the United Nations no longer holds even one ounce of legitimacy or relevance. The Organization was founded in the wake of the Holocaust for the purpose of preventing atrocities. Yet the spectacle we just saw proves beyond a doubt that the United Nations is committed, sadly and tragically, not to preventing, but ensuring further

atrocities. Israel just endured the largest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust. And according to a majority of the so-called family of nations, Israel has no right to defend itself. Entire families and communities have been exterminated by genocidal Hamas jihadists, whose sole goal is to annihilate the Jewish State. There is no reasoning with evil like that. There are no talks or discussions to be held. We saw exactly what they dream of doing to every Israeli and Jew. And we will not sit idly by to let them rearm and commit such atrocities once again. We will not, just as every single other Member State in this Hall would not.

Israel has the right to defend itself, and the realization of that right is to ensure that such atrocities are never repeated. The only way to ensure that is the eradication of Hamas's terror capabilities. It is the only way. Yet this resolution (resolution ES-10/21) does not even name Hamas, as if this war started on its own. Not once. Even when discussing our hostages, the drafters could not even bring themselves to name the Hamas terrorists responsible for this blatant war crime. Not even once. It is the duty of this organ to call out murderous terrorists by name, not hide them behind empty words. Why are you defending murderers? Why are you defending terrorists who deliberately beheaded children and abducted babies? What is going on here? This must make everyone ask themselves what the true aim was when the draft resolution (A/ES-10/L.25) was submitted. Was it to bring about a solution, or was it to tie Israel's hands from defending itself?

Israel's goal is to eradicate Hamas's capabilities for the sole purpose of preventing future atrocities. We all know that, if given the chance, Hamas and Hizbullah would commit the 7 October massacre again and again and again until there is not a single Israeli left to murder or a single citizen to terrorize and drive away from Israel. And the only way to destroy Hamas is to root them out of their tunnels and their subterranean city of terror. Hamas has embedded itself deep within and under the Gazan civilian population. Just today, Israeli intelligence unequivocally proved that Hamas's main operating base is located inside and underneath Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza, home to thousands of patients and medical staff. The people of Gaza are being exploited as human Shields for terrorists. Why? Why are you not holding Hamas accountable? Seventeen years of Hamas's indiscriminate rocket fire on our civilians from within populated areas is not enough for you to comprehend this? Yet this dangerous resolution demands that Israel call for Gazans to return to the

active war zone. Is the goal here to further endanger human lives? The ridiculous resolution has the audacity to call for a truce. The goal of the resolution's truce is that Israel should cease to defend itself against Hamas so that Hamas can light us on fire.

The drafters of this terrible resolution have shown that according to them, the most reliable source for accurate information is a terror group similar to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS). Israel is closely monitoring the humanitarian situation in Gaza, and we know that there is no humanitarian crisis in accordance with international humanitarian law. Trusting the reports coming out of Gaza is exactly like trusting reports from ISIS. Does the international community trust information provided by ISIS? Does it trust numbers provided by Boko Haram? Of course not. So why is Hamas, a savage terror group, no different than ISIS or Boko Haram, trusted? How can the international community choose to believe such distortions? Every single Gazan ministry is run by Hamas. It is all a front for Hamas. Every official statistic is the word of genocidal terrorists. For example, the fact that United Nations officials and some here are still parroting Hamas's lies about what happened at the Al Ahli Hospital is a true disgrace. It was proven with absolute certainty that it was a Palestinian Islamic Jihad rocket that hit the hospital parking lot and that the number of casualties is far lower than Hamas's reports. Yet you continues to echo these lies. Shame on you! Shame on you!

The truth holds zero importance in this body. Zero. Today the majority of the international community has shown that it prefers to support the defence of Nazi terrorists rather than support the law-abiding State of Israel to defend its civilians. Anyone who is truly interested in preventing violence should not vote for resolutions protecting terrorists. And whoever truly wants to prevent more violence should be calling on Hamas to lay down their arms, turn themselves in and return all hostages. If that were to happen, the war would end immediately. Immediately. This is a dark day for the United Nations and for humankind.

Israel will continue to defend itself. We will defend our future, our very existence, by ridding the world of Hamas's evil so that it can never threaten anyone else again. Israel will use every means at its disposal to accomplish this mission. Israel will do what must be done to eradicate Hamas's capabilities and bring the hostages home. And we will bring them home.

**Mrs. Patel (India):** In a world where differences and disputes should be resolved by dialogue, this body should be deeply concerned at recourse to violence—that too when it happens on a scale and intensity that is an affront to basic human values. Violence as a means to achieve political objectives damages indiscriminately and does not pave the way for any durable solutions. The terror attacks in Israel on 7 October were shocking and deserve condemnation. Our thoughts are also with those taken hostage. We call for their immediate and unconditional release. Terrorism is a malignancy and knows no borders, nationality or race. The world should not buy into any justification of terror acts. Let us keep aside differences, unite and adopt a zero-tolerance approach to terrorism.

Casualties in the ongoing conflict in Gaza are a telling, serious and continuing concern. Civilians, especially women and children, are paying with their lives. This humanitarian crisis needs to be addressed. We welcome the international community's de-escalation efforts and delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza. India too has contributed to this effort. India is deeply concerned at the deteriorating security situation and astounding loss of civilian lives in the ongoing conflict. The escalation of hostilities in the region will only exacerbate the humanitarian crisis. It is necessary for all parties to display the utmost responsibility.

India has always supported a negotiated two-State solution to the Israel-Palestine issue leading to the establishment of a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine living within secure and recognized borders side by side in peace with Israel. For this, we urge the parties to de-escalate, eschew violence and work towards creating conditions for an early resumption of direct peace negotiations. We hope that the deliberations of the Assembly will send a clear message against terror and violence and expand prospects for diplomacy and dialogue, while addressing the humanitarian crisis that confronts us.

**Ms. Oppong-Ntiri (Ghana):** Ghana is gravely concerned by the situation in the Middle East triggered in the latest instance by the outrage caused by Hamas on 7 October in southern Israel, including continuing to hold as hostages those abducted, and the impact of the response of Israel, which has created a humanitarian nightmare in Gaza. We understand the moral dilemma Hamas has created for Israel and the Palestinian people. But Hamas is not the Palestinian people. We appreciate

the recognition by Israel that its actions must be guided by international law and the responsibility to protect civilians.

We have a responsibility as the international community to help end the heart-breaking tragedies that have brought tears, hate, revenge and a cycle of despair to those caught up in the violence visited on Israel and Palestine. That is why Ghana has worked with other members of the Security Council, including Brazil, as President of the month, to find a consensual resolution in the Council that responds to the pain and fear of Israelis and the safety, security and well-being of Palestinian civilians. That is also why we think that out of this tragedy we must find the fierce agency to support the two parties, Israel and the Palestinian Authority, to resume and conclude a peace agreement so that there are two nations, Israel and Palestine, who live side by side within secure and recognized borders.

We voted for resolution ES-10/21, submitted by the Group of Arab States, not because it met the comprehensive set of elements necessary for a balanced text, but because we cannot turn away from the unfolding humanitarian disaster in the Gaza Strip. We cannot ignore the real threat of a regional war involving many actors inside and outside the immediate theatre of conflict, and we cannot squander the impetus within this organ to seriously push for the resumption of negotiations on the two-State solution. We are pleased that we had the opportunity to vote on the draft amendment (A/ES-10/L.26) condemning Hamas and calling for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held by that group. Those who arm groups whose actions endanger the lives and statehood of Palestine must reconsider if that support is indeed in the interest of the people of Palestine. We call on all, including Israel, to take action to restore the authority and legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority.

We are convinced that, until an Israel-Palestine peace treaty is signed, the good will of the Palestinian people is the best guarantee for true security. We call on Israel, as a gesture of goodwill, to declare a voluntary truce to enable needed humanitarian services to be provided to the people of Gaza and to give space to genuine steps that address its legitimate security concerns, including the immediate and unconditional release of the hostages and a durable peace. We equally call on all those with influence over Hamas to encourage them to commit to the peace negotiations and an end to the campaign of terror.

**Mr. Sahraoui** (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country voted in favour of resolution ES-10/21 because we are convinced of the importance of uniting the efforts of the international community to achieve our basic objectives and take urgent measures and steps to end the suffering of our people in the occupied Palestinian territories following the recent aggression, which has been waged by the occupying forces for nearly three weeks. That aggression will indeed become more intense in the light of the ground invasion of the Gaza Strip, which will undoubtedly result in massive loss of life. We must all stand firm in facing the death that threatens the people in Gaza.

We would like to stress the following.

First, my country dissociates itself from any language in resolution ES-10/21 that equates the victim with the executioner and from any attempt to place the responsibility for the massacre on the Palestinian people. The occupation, in its clear and explicit violation of international law and instruments, is responsible for the ongoing escalation and its catastrophic results.

Secondly, my country dissociates itself from any language in the resolution that would legitimize in any way the heinous aggression against the besieged Gaza Strip. We reiterate in that context our condemnation in the strongest terms of the massacres that are being perpetrated against the Palestinian people, and we call on the international community to take a firm stand to end the bloodbath and provide protection to the unarmed Palestinian people.

Thirdly, we deplore the deletion of the language referring to the call for a ceasefire that was included in the original text. It is unacceptable morally and politically for some parties to object to the call for a ceasefire. An immediate ceasefire is not a choice but an absolute necessity so as to end the ethnic cleansing that the Palestinian people are facing today and address the current dire humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.

Fourthly, we also regret the poor language concerning accountability, and we stress the need to investigate the crimes committed by the occupation forces against unarmed civilians and to hold accountable those who are responsible for perpetrating them before competent bodies and organizations.

Fifthly, the resolution adopted by the General Assembly today does not relieve the Council of its responsibilities but sheds light on the path that it must take to maintain international peace and security

pursuant to Article 24 of the United Nations Charter. The Security Council cannot continue to be silent when women and children are being killed every day in the occupied Palestinian territories.

In conclusion, we reiterate Algeria's firm position and its unconditional support to the brotherly Palestinian people in their struggle for their legitimate and inalienable rights, foremost of which is their right to establish an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital. We call on the international community to enable the Palestinian people to enjoy their rights as that is the only way to achieve peace and security in the Middle East.

**Mr. Hauri** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): On 7 October, Hamas deliberately carried out shocking and unjustified terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians. Switzerland condemned those attacks in the strongest terms in the very earliest hours.

Switzerland voted in favour of resolution ES-10/21, submitted by Jordan to the General Assembly. Nevertheless, in our view, it is important to condemn the Hamas terrorist attacks. That is why we also supported draft amendment A/ES-10/L.26 submitted by Canada. We regret that the unjustified and shocking terrorist attacks by Hamas and a call for an immediate release of the hostages without conditions were not included in the final text.

We call for an immediate, sustained and lasting humanitarian pause, which would lead to a cessation of hostilities. The resolution addresses the most pressing issues. It allows rapid, safe and unhindered passage of humanitarian assistance to people in need. The humanitarian situation in Gaza is catastrophic. Aid and protection for the Gazans, in particular for the millions of displaced persons, are lacking. Today that is the priority, given the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem.

Switzerland also notes that the resolution expresses the deep commitment of many United Nations Member States to international law, in particular international humanitarian law and human rights law. We recognize Israel's legitimate right to defence and national security. International humanitarian law takes into account both the legitimate security needs and the military needs. We remind all parties that the rules of international humanitarian law must be respected without exception,



including the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution in carrying out hostilities.

Switzerland is undertaking efforts in support of united action by the Security Council and will continue to do so.

Lastly, we must not lose sight of the fact that the only way to establish peace and security is the two-State solution, two democratic States — Israel and Palestine — living side by side in peace within safe and recognized borders, as the Assembly for decades has called for.

**Mr. Kulháněk** (Czechia): Hamas's terror has plunged Israel and Palestinian territories into a new spiral of violence in which civilians — both Israelis and Palestinians — are suffering gravely. Many lives have been lost. Homes, hospitals and schools have been damaged. Hamas has embedded itself in civilian communities and is using innocent civilians as human shields. But even wars have rules, and the effort to protect every civilian life lies at the very core of them. All civilians must be protected at all times, in line with international humanitarian law.

Czechia has condemned in the strongest possible terms the appalling terrorist attacks in which, in just one day, on 7 October, Hamas and other terrorist groups slaughtered more than 1,400 men, women and children. We have all seen the horrific accounts of the barbaric crimes. There is just no excuse, no justification, for those atrocities. The more than 200 people abducted and held hostage by Hamas must be released immediately and without any preconditions. We are unequivocal in our support for Israel's right to defend itself and its citizens against that terror and to protect its territory, in line with international law.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza has reached a critical point. The population is in urgent need of food, water and medicine. We welcomed the opening of the Rafah border crossing and the initial entry of essential aid. We support the calls to step up the delivery of urgent humanitarian assistance while ensuring it is not abused by terrorists.

The risk of the conflict spreading further in the region is imminent. An escalation of the conflict puts at risk the positive dynamics that the region has been working on. We commend the tireless diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the situation and to prevent the Hamas-Israel conflict from spiralling into a regional war. To that end, actions that incite violence and escalate the conflict, as well as any support to the terrorist groups,

such as Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, have to be rejected.

Resolution ES-10/21, which the General Assembly has just adopted, contains many points that we support as an attempt to address the complex situation. However, the resolution fails to condemn the terrorist attacks by Hamas on 7 October. There is no call for the unconditional release of all hostages taken by Hamas. The resolution fails to recognize Israel's right to defend itself and its citizens against terrorism.

Last but not least, it does not provide assurances that the delivery of urgent humanitarian assistance is not abused by Hamas and other terrorists. If we are not clear about the need to stop terrorism, we are not making progress towards the desired peace in the Middle East. For those reasons, Czechia decided to vote against the resolution.

Despite the current burst of anger and division, we believe that the majority of Israelis and Palestinians prefer the path of peace, not war and terror. Czechia is firmly committed to a two-State solution, which remains the only vital perspective to ensure Israel's security and to fulfil the Palestinian desire for their own statehood. Both Israelis and Palestinians deserve to live in peace, security and dignity.

**Mr. García Toma** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru voted in favour of both resolution ES-10/21, introduced by Jordan, and draft amendment A/ES-10/L.26, presented by Canada as the Security Council has been unable to reach the necessary consensus to provide a solution to a conflict that is taking more human lives with each passing day. It is therefore the responsibility of the General Assembly to make recommendations for the adoption of measures within the framework of the "Uniting for peace" resolution.

The text we adopted contains fundamental and necessary elements for an immediate truce leading to a cessation of hostilities, the release of hostages, the protection of the population and the search for a just and lasting solution that will allow the two States — Palestine and Israel — to live in peace within mutually agreed and internationally recognized secure borders in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

I must reaffirm that Peru strongly condemns all terrorist acts, such as those perpetrated by Hamas against Israel on 7 October. At the same time, Peru also considers it a moral and legal imperative to respect international

law, in particular international humanitarian law, in order to guarantee the protection of civilians everywhere, without distinction of creed or nationality.

It is that principled position that will continue to guide our action in the United Nations.

**Ms. Leendertse** (Germany): Today was a difficult day for the General Assembly. I thank Jordan for its work and take the opportunity to explain our vote.

On 7 October, Israel fell victim to an unprecedented terrorist attack carried out by Hamas. Many civilians have been killed, injured or kidnapped. For almost three weeks now, Hamas has continued launching rockets against civilian targets in Israel. One can hear the cry in Israel, where families mourn their loved ones — killed, maimed, tortured, brutally abducted by Hamas terrorists.

For Germany, Israel's security is non-negotiable. Hamas must unconditionally and immediately release all hostages, stop its indiscriminate rocket attacks and refrain from using civilians as human shields. Like any other State in the world, Israel has the right to defend itself against terrorism within the framework of international law.

Addressing the plight of Palestinians in no way contradicts that clear and unwavering stance. We also hear the cry of parents in Gaza mourning and fearing for the lives of their children. The humanitarian situation in Gaza is getting more dire day by day. Germany calls for continued rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and aid to reach those in need through all necessary measures, including humanitarian corridors and pauses for humanitarian needs.

We believe that resolution ES-10/21, presented by Jordan on behalf of the Group of Arab States, rightly underlines the pressing humanitarian needs of civilians in Gaza and calls for humanitarian access. On the other hand, in our view, the text has major flaws. It fell short of explicitly condemning the terrorist attacks by Hamas and calling out Hamas responsibility for killing civilians, taking hostages and indiscriminately firing rockets against civilian targets. We therefore thank Canada for submitting draft amendment A/ES-10/L.26, clearly naming Hamas's responsibility and suggesting more unequivocal language. Germany therefore supported the Canadian draft amendment and deeply regrets that it did not secure the necessary majority. Germany abstained in the voting on resolution ES-10/21.

In the United Nations we speak the language of international law, of humanity, of peaceful coexistence. That is what unites us. The rules of the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law should guide our work towards a meaningful peace process, allowing both Israelis and Palestinians to live side by side in peace and security in two independent States. We must all step up our efforts to that end.

**Mr. Gafoor** (Singapore): After very careful consideration, Singapore voted in favour of resolution ES-10/21. However, we deeply regret that the resolution has two glaring and significant omissions.

First, the resolution makes no mention of Hamas's role in perpetrating the massive and coordinated terror attacks that led to the brutal killing of 1,400 Israelis and others and the abduction of more than 200 hostages. We unequivocally condemn those acts of terror, and the abhorrent deeds of Hamas cannot be justified by any rationale whatsoever. We reiterate our call for the immediate, unconditional and safe release of all civilians taken hostage.

Secondly, the resolution does not acknowledge knowledge Israel's legitimate right to defend its citizens and territory in compliance with international law. As with every country, Israel has a right to defend itself from heinous terrorist attacks to protect its people from senseless violence and to keep its territory secure.

*Mr. Valtýsson (Iceland), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Nevertheless, Singapore supported the resolution because we have always been a consistent advocate and defender of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the rules-based multilateral system. The resolution reaffirms all parties' obligation to respect and uphold international law, including international humanitarian law. It expresses strong support for the efforts by the Secretary-General and for his calls for the immediate and unrestricted access of humanitarian aid and to respond to the most basic needs of the Palestinians civilian population amid the unfolding humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. It demands that all parties immediately and fully comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law — obligations that have been spelled out in many Security Council resolutions. All innocent civilian lives must be protected.

**Mr. Lagdameo** (Philippines): The Philippines notes with grave concern the recent escalation of hostilities

in the Middle East. We condemn the killings, terrorist attacks and other acts of violence by Hamas that took place in Israel on 7 Oct, and in that regard acknowledge the right of Israel to self-defence in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

We mourn the loss of innocent lives and extend our sympathies to all affected civilians in Israel and the Palestinian territories. We deeply regret the violation of international humanitarian law, which has imperilled the safety of civilian populations. In the light of the alarming scale of civilian casualties, we call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law. We express concern at the massive destruction of health and medical facilities, which further increases unnecessary human suffering.

The ongoing conflict deeply concerns us, with its broad and profound impact on countless innocent civilians, including Filipino nationals and their families. Joining the call of the international community, the Philippines strongly urges the swift release of all hostages. We call for the end of the taking and detainment of individuals, particularly women and children. We reiterate our plea to the international community to come together and provide essential humanitarian aid and support to the affected. Most important, we urge all concerned to immediately put in place urgent solutions that would prevent the conflict from further escalating, spreading and becoming protracted.

The Philippines supports the efforts of the United Nations to deliver urgent humanitarian assistance and essential supplies to Palestinian civilians caught up in the conflict in the Gaza Strip. We commend the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other related United Nations agencies for their efforts and sacrifice amid these challenging times. The Philippines lends its full support to calls for ensuring the safety of civilians seeking refuge in UNRWA premises across Gaza. We welcome the opening of a humanitarian corridor with Egypt, as it is important that the United Nations humanitarian system be supported and enabled to respond to the scale of the needs of the affected populations in a predictable and sustainable manner. We are also hopeful for a solution to be reached in the soonest possible time in order for the Rafah crossing to start receiving foreign nationals, including our Filipinos still in Gaza.

We also continue to support United Nations peacekeeping missions in the region. We believe that a multilateral approach is crucial in addressing the crisis and preventing further escalation. The Philippines urges the Security Council to endorse and support coordinated efforts with United Nations entities for the safe evacuation and protection of migrants in conflict zones. We earnestly appeal to all parties involved to cooperate in safeguarding their security. With approximately 30,000 Filipino nationals in Israel and a further 130 in Gaza, their safety and well-being remain paramount to us.

Reaffirming our position, the Philippines firmly supports a two-State solution, consistently aligned with past international agreements and relevant United Nations resolutions. Both Israelis and Palestinians deserve a future where their rights, aspirations and security are recognized and upheld. This enduring Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains a pivotal determinant for the peace and stability of the region. A lasting resolution can be achieved only through comprehensive dialogue and negotiations, anchored firmly in international law. The Philippines ardently urges all parties to elevate dialogue as the primary tool for a peaceful and lasting resolution.

Following the inability of the Security Council to act on many draft resolutions on the crisis brought to its Chamber, it is now incumbent upon the General Assembly to take action, do the utmost to bridge the divides and champion the path to peace. Resolution ES-10/21, adopted today, includes many elements that the Philippines supports. Notably, it condemns all acts of violence against both Israeli and Palestinian civilians. It calls for respect for international humanitarian law, access for humanitarian assistance to address the large-scale needs in Gaza, and the immediate and unconditional release of innocent civilians being held captive. It also reaffirms our long-standing support for a two-State solution with a safe and independent Palestine and a secure Israel living in peace. Overall, the resolution expresses the grave concern of the international community over the situation, which the Philippines genuinely shares.

We condole with all victims and their families and pray for a peaceful resolution of this conflict. However, as we would condemn all terrorist attacks, the resolution does not mention or condemn the terrorist attack of 7 October by Hamas, which led to the deaths of innocent civilians, including women and children,

as well as some Filipinos. Because of this attack, we recognize Israel's right to self-defence as provided for under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, reflected in the resolution.

Therefore, despite commendable efforts by the co-sponsors to improve the original text, for those reasons, my delegation abstained in the voting on the resolution.

**Mr. Hwang** (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea voted in favour of the draft amendment put forward by Canada (A/ES-10/L.26) and then abstained in the voting on resolution ES-10/21, proposed by Jordan, particularly because the Canadian draft amendment was not adopted. We believe that the language condemning Hamas and calling for an immediate and unconditional release of all hostages taken by Hamas are essential elements that should have been included in the resolution. Let us be reminded that the rapidly deteriorating situation in Israel and Gaza commenced with the brutal terrorist attacks by Hamas. The Republic of Korea condemns in the strongest possible terms these unjustifiable terrorist attacks. We believe that all States have the right and duty to protect themselves and their citizens, in compliance with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law.

We have already witnessed over 8,000 fatalities on both sides, most of whom are civilians. The death toll is rapidly increasing. Even at this very moment, innocent civilians are losing their lives. Civilians should not be a target. I would like to take this opportunity to convey my deepest condolences to the families of the 53 United Nations humanitarian workers who have been killed in Gaza since the beginning of the fighting on 7 October. Irrespective of nationality, gender, age, ethnicity or faith, all civilians must be protected. It is extremely painful to bear witness to more and more civilians, especially women and children, suffering immensely because of this conflict. All parties to conflict must abide by the rules under international humanitarian law, including the principle of distinction.

In addition, the rapid, unimpeded and sustained passage of humanitarian aid must be allowed. We urge the establishment of pragmatic measures, including a humanitarian pause and humanitarian corridor. Time is of the essence. As we stand on the edge of the precipice of a humanitarian catastrophe, we urge the relevant parties on the ground to continue all diplomatic efforts

to facilitate the rapid, safe and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance for innocent civilians.

Enmity among States and widespread hatred among people are what extremist groups in the region desire. We cannot, and must not, allow that. Our common humanity simply must prevail. My delegation would like to stress that this situation must not spill over into other parts of the region. Such spillover benefits no one. Therefore, all major players in the region should continue to exert redoubled diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the conflict.

Protecting civilians and preventing spillover must serve as our guiding priorities at this fragile moment. However, in addition, we all know that the issue of Israel and Palestine is not something that started on 7 October — it has been going on for decades. That is why it is crucial to establish a durable peace solution to end these repeated atrocities and break the cycle of violence. The Republic of Korea believes that sustainable, lasting peace in the region can be achieved only through sincere negotiations based on the two-State solution, with security and dignity for all. The current catastrophic situation also reminds us, in the most poignant way, of the urgent need for sincere dialogue to discuss, contemplate and hammer out every aspect related to this extremely complicated issue, with the long-term goal in mind. We strongly believe that, even during this bloody and inflamed juncture, all diplomatic channels among relevant countries and parties should actively continue to operate behind the scenes.

**Mr. Mythen** (Ireland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the following States, which voted in favour of this resolution (ES-10/21) — Belgium, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Spain and my own country, Ireland.

We supported this resolution as it addresses steps that must be implemented with the utmost urgency in order to protect civilian lives and increase the provision of humanitarian aid. At the same time, we emphasize that the resolution does not comprehensively reflect our position. In particular, we wish to reiterate our condemnation in the strongest possible terms of the brutal terrorist attacks by Hamas that took place in Israel on 7 October. There is never any justification for terrorist attacks against civilians in any circumstances. We strongly condemn the taking of hostages, and demand their immediate and unconditional release.

We regret, therefore, that the draft amendment introduced by Canada (A/ES-10/L.26) failed to be



adopted. We strongly emphasize Israel's right to defend itself in line with international law, including international humanitarian law. We fully support the demand in the resolution that all parties comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

In addition, we emphasize the prohibitions under international humanitarian law of the taking of hostages and the use of civilians as human shields, and the requirement to avoid locating military objectives within or near densely populated areas. They are serious violations of the rule of law that put civilians at unconscionable risk. We fully support calls for humanitarian pauses and humanitarian corridors. We underline the urgent need to secure sufficient and unhindered provision of essential goods and services to civilians throughout the Gaza Strip. We underline the importance of allowing full, rapid, safe and unhindered access for all humanitarian organizations. We commend the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East along with other United Nations organizations and humanitarian actors for their selfless work in support of the people of Gaza and across the Middle East, and we offer our condolences to those who have lost their lives.

It remains of the utmost importance to restore a political horizon. The resolution that we have just adopted makes it clear. We reaffirm that a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be achieved only by peaceful means based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, in accordance with international law and on the basis of the two-State solution. We support the attempts, including through the Peace Day Effort, to revive a political process on the basis of the two-State solution that meets Israeli and Palestinian security needs and Palestinian aspirations for statehood and sovereignty. We urge all partners to redouble efforts to foster consensus and promote meaningful engagement to that end, and we regret that the Security Council has not been able to pronounce itself on the situation.

**Mr. Dandy** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At this moment, as this meeting is taking place, we are receiving reports that Israel has indeed launched a barbaric ground offensive against the Gaza Strip, which will of course lead to large numbers of unimaginable civilian casualties. Israel even cut off communications and the Internet in Gaza, hoping it

would be able to cover up its barbaric crimes against the brotherly Palestinian people. How will some Western countries — above all, the United States of America — justify all those crimes after causing us headache with their calls for human rights? This brutal attack can in no way be justified by what those countries describe, falsely and unjustifiably, as Israel's right to self-defence.

The world has grown sick and tired of the lies and hypocrisy of some Western countries. Today, with another dark page in the book of Israeli criminal acts, we witness the continuation of Israel's bloody attack on the Gaza Strip for the twentieth consecutive day. The Israeli massacres have reached unimaginable levels. They have resulted in the killing of more than 7,000 civilians, most of whom were women and children. Not even rocks were spared. The Baptist Hospital, a church and residential areas were bombed, as were journalists, doctors, engineers, students and even United Nations personnel. Nothing in Gaza has been spared from Israel's barbarism — the other face of the terrorist organization Da'esh and a new source of shame for some Western countries, especially the United States, which has offered Israel protection and impunity and has given Israeli fascists carte blanche to kill Palestinian people, preventing the Security Council from upholding its responsibility to stop this aggression and put an end to the war crimes and the crimes against humanity perpetrated by Israel.

My country's delegation voted in the General Assembly today in favour of resolution ES-10/21, as it primarily aims to stop Israel's barbaric war machine. It calls for an immediate halt to the aggression and for the delivery of humanitarian aid, rejecting the forced eviction of Palestinians. However, my delegation would like to express its reservations about some of the language contained in it, which might be construed as equating the Israeli occupier with the Palestinian people under occupation, the murderer with the murdered and the executioner with the victim.

In conclusion, the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates its full support for the brotherly Palestinian people, their legitimate struggle which is guaranteed by international law and their right to establish their independent State with Jerusalem as its capital.

**Mrs. González López** (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): El Salvador welcomes the adoption of the resolution entitled "Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations" (ES-

10/21), which we consider to be a tangible result of this resumed emergency special session. My country believes that the text recently adopted by the General Assembly is an urgent and balanced response, which has placed at the very core of the Organization's efforts the protection of all civilians and the urgent provision of humanitarian assistance.

El Salvador condemned and will continue to condemn all terrorist acts, regardless of what motivated them and where, when and by whom they were committed. We call for an end to the indiscriminate attacks and all aggression against all civilians. We call for an end to the human suffering and to the widespread destruction.

**Mr. Ladeb** (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): Tunisia decided to abstain in the voting on resolution ES-10/21 because it believes that the dangerous and unprecedented situation in the Gaza Strip, resulting from Israel's continued brutal onslaught against the Palestinian people and the prevention of all forms of basic life-saving assistance from reaching millions of Palestinians, requires a much higher standard and a clearer position.

While the resolution calls for facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid and rejects the forced displacement of Palestinians, it does not clearly and strongly condemn the crimes of war and genocide that are being perpetrated by the occupation forces. Moreover, it does not call for holding the occupier accountable for its crimes. The resolution does not clearly call for an immediate cessation of the aggression, and it also places the victim and the executioner on equal footing. Despite that, certain States continued to put forward amendments that focused solely on giving the occupation forces more free reign in perpetrating and justifying their crimes. We therefore called to vote on the text of a draft resolution that would not exacerbate the situation and the suffering of the Palestinians. As a result of those amendments not being adopted, we decided to abstain in the voting on the resolution with a view to upholding Tunisia's principled position, which rejects treating the aggressor and the subject of the aggression as equals and which stresses the clear and explicit condemnation of the aggression perpetrated by the occupation forces against the Palestinian people. Those are principled positions of our policy, and we will not allow them to be dismissed in a resolution being adopted in such an exceptional and such a dangerous situation.

Tunisia will continue its firm and principled support for the Palestinian people, their legitimate rights and the establishment of their State on their territory. We expect that United Nations resolutions on this subject, of which there are more than 1,000, will be respected and implemented in order to put an end to the aggression against and the suffering of the Palestinian people and to put an end to the occupation.

We must call things as they are. Shelling hospitals, killing women and children, torturing millions of innocent civilians and targeting houses of worship and homes cannot be self-defence. On the contrary, those are war crimes. At the same time, the right to self-determination, the right to resist occupation and the right to reject racial discrimination are being treated as terrorism.

We call on the international community, the Security Council and the General Assembly to shoulder their responsibilities and put an end to all those practices, fallacies and half solutions. The Palestinian people must be allowed to enjoy their rights, which are not subject to a statute of limitations, and must also be granted international protection.

**Mr. Larsen** (Australia): First, Australia expresses appreciation for Jordan's leadership and sincere efforts in bringing forward resolution ES-10/21. We agree with the central proposition that the humanitarian situation in Gaza is dire, and human suffering is widespread and unacceptable.

Australia again calls for humanitarian pauses in hostilities so that food, water, medicine and other essential assistance can reach people in desperate need and so that civilians can get to safety. However, we abstained in the voting with disappointment because we believe the resolution as drafted is incomplete.

The resolution does not recognize that terror group Hamas is a perpetrator of the 7 October attack. And Australia again explicitly calls for the immediate and unconditional release of hostages. Moreover, the Charter of the United Nations guarantees national sovereignty. We believe the General Assembly can affirm Israel's right to exist without denying the long-standing and legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, including to statehood, aspirations which Australia supports.

We can affirm Israel's right to defend itself while also saying the way it does so matters. It matters for innocent civilians who should not pay for horrors

perpetrated by Hamas, and it matters for Israel's ongoing security, which would face grave threats if conflict were to spill over across the region.

Aspirations for peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians will recede even further if today's generations are motivated by grief and resentment resulting from the crisis. The Assembly of nations has no lesser duty than to seek to solve the insoluble and transform despair into hope.

And despite disagreement on the resolution, efforts behind the scenes make clear that most Member States are acting in good faith and want to chart a path out of the crisis towards a political process. That political process must end in a just and enduring peace in the form of a two-State solution, where Israelis and Palestinians can live securely and prosperously within internationally recognized borders. That two-State solution must be the new reality that overcomes entrenched ideologies.

Achieving that reality calls for us to see each other's humanity. It requires all States and all sides to respect the right of others to exist, and it will require leadership, understanding and courage.

**Mr. Pieris** (Sri Lanka): My delegation voted in favour of resolution ES-10/21, submitted by Jordan on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

The paramount need is the cessation of hostilities, the release of hostages and the enabling of the provision of humanitarian aid to those in dire need. The essence of the resolution presented by Jordan captures those needs adequately. It also captures the need to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Furthermore, the resolution reaffirms that a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be achieved only by peaceful means based on relevant United Nations resolutions, in accordance with international law, and must be founded on the two-State solution. That is a position that Sri Lanka has consistently maintained.

Sri Lanka condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. That includes the terrorist attacks that took place on 7 October against the civilian population in Israel. The Jordanian resolution, however, takes cognizance of the 7 October attack and the increase in violence since then and condemns all acts of violence against Palestinian and Israeli civilians, including all acts of terror and indiscriminate attacks, as well as all acts of provocation, incitement and destruction.

Accordingly, my delegation desisted from supporting draft amendment A/ES-10/L.26, submitted by Canada, on the basis that the pith and substance of the Canadian draft amendment had been substantially captured in the text of the Jordanian resolution in the preambular paragraphs and particularly operative paragraph 7, which calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all civilians who have been illegally held captive and demands their safety, well-being and humane treatment in compliance with international law.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to begin by congratulating all United Nations Members States on the adoption of resolution ES-10/21, which is so important and urgently needed given the escalating situation. That is not a victory of a certain national position. It is a position of common sense and justice and humanism. It is a clear reflection of the enormous concerns about the fate of the peaceful citizens of Israel and Gaza, which we all share.

The resolution is the least we can and must do for them. Unfortunately, due to the position of Western delegations, the Security Council was unable to take any decision. In the General Assembly however, the voice of the united Arab world and sensible members of the international community and Arab States prevailed. Now both sides must listen.

First and foremost, this is about an immediate ceasefire, which must end the violence. That is particularly important given the information coming in about the start of military ground operations in Gaza. It is unfortunate to note that our Western partners still try to see only one side. Moreover, this skewed approach is now being forced upon all Member States. We believe that this does not respond to the tasks placed before this trusted Organization, namely to ensure peace and security.

We clearly condemned both the terrorist acts and the deaths of Israelis and other citizens in Israel, as well as the indiscriminate bombing of Gaza and the resulting Palestinian civilian victims. The resolution submitted to the General Assembly by our Jordanian friends was at the last moment, diluted by the Canadian draft amendment (A/ES-10/L.26), which made it clearly biased. It painted one side black and the other white.

The outcome of the votes further attests to the fact against the backtrack of the tragedy taking place in the Middle East, as well as loss of civilian lives, suffering and hardship, the responsible members of the

international community understand that it is not time to push for any opportunistic agendas. Rather, we must rally behind a unified, strong voice to end violence as soon as possible and to come back to peaceful negotiations in a United Nations-approved platform and on the basis of the universally recognized international legal framework. The outcome must be the creation of a sovereign Palestinian State within the 1967 borders, with a capital in East Jerusalem, coexisting in peace and security with Israel. That, more than anything else, will contribute to safety among States in the Middle East, including Israel, and it will contribute to peace in the region. Today's crisis is a tragedy, but it is also a clear confirmation of the need to implement these long-standing Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and decisions.

**Ms. Squeff** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina voted in favour of resolution ES-10/21.

Argentina considers it a priority to avoid escalating clashes in Israel and Palestine and their potential spread to the region.

Similarly, Argentina condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and affirms that terrorist acts are unacceptable, unjustifiable and should be deplored by the international community as a whole. In that context, I would like to reiterate emphatically and unequivocally, as my Government did on 7 October, Argentina's firm condemnation of the terrorist acts perpetrated by Hamas against Israel.

We therefore voted in favour of draft amendment A/ES-10/L.26, proposed by Canada, to incorporate those concepts in the resolution we have just adopted, and regret that it did not receive the necessary support.

At the same time, without wavering, we decided to support the resolution, even with those and other shortcomings, in order to prioritize the Organization's imperative to encourage every effort to ensure that the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip does not continue to worsen and that humanitarian assistance reaches those who need it.

It is essential that international law, human rights and international humanitarian law be fully respected and that civilians be protected, regardless of their nationality.

Hamas must release the hostages immediately and unconditionally and, while we recognize the right to self-defence in the framework of respect for

international law, we must also step up calls for a cessation of hostilities.

**Mr. Al-Fatlawi** (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of Iraq regrets that the Security Council did not shoulder its legal, humanitarian and ethical responsibilities by taking binding measures to bring an end to the military aggression carried out by the Israeli occupation forces. The Council has failed, over the past three weeks, to adopt any resolution to put an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people. The result was to resort to the General Assembly. However, the international community did not duly consider the significant tragedy and the difficult conditions suffered by the Palestinian people due to acts of aggression perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces. That international silence emboldened the Israeli occupation forces to carry out a land invasion, while ignoring international calls and United Nations resolutions.

Since it is a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Group of Arab States, Iraq co-sponsored resolution ES-10/21, despite the fact that it has not met all our demands, shared by many States in the world, as expressed in our statements delivered in the Security Council and the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, as well as our principled positions vis-à-vis the Palestinian question and our steadfast support for the Palestinian people's rights to self-determination and the establishment of their own independent State on Palestinian territory, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Iraq would like to change its vote on resolution ES-10/21 to a vote in favour, as there was a technical problem at the time of voting. My country's delegation would like to note its reservation on certain words and demands in the resolution that run counter to our national laws.

**Mr. Chatrnúch** (Slovakia): Slovakia reiterates our strongest condemnation of Hamas for its brutal and indiscriminate terrorist attack across Israel. The use of civilians as human shields by Hamas is a particularly deplorable atrocity. We also emphasize Israel's right to defend itself in line with international law.

The fundamental principles of the conduct of hostilities in international humanitarian law are proportionality, distinction and precaution. As recalled by the United Nations a few days ago, war has rules, starting with the fundamental principle of respecting and protecting civilians. All civilians should be



protected at all times. We call on Hamas to immediately release all hostages without any preconditions. We are also gravely concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza. We know that the situation is at breaking point and that we need to act urgently if we are to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe. We call for continued rapid, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access and aid to reach those in need.

We recognize and agree with the crucial humanitarian elements in resolution ES-10/21. However, there are vitally important aspects concerning the current escalations that are missing from it, and it is crucial that they be reiterated. They include the condemnation of the indiscriminate terrorist attacks on Israel on 7 October, the confirmation and reiteration of Israel's right to self-defence and the call for the immediate release of all hostages. Those are just a few of the elements missing from the text that Slovakia, together with other European Union member States, tried to include in order to ensure that it portrayed a full picture of the current situation. Unfortunately, the fact that those crucial points were not considered prevented us from supporting the resolution. Nevertheless, Slovakia remains committed to a lasting and sustainable peace, based on a two-State solution and the relevant Security Council resolutions and established through reinvigorated efforts in the Middle East peace process.

**Mr. Eshragh Jahromi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, my delegation would like to once again strongly condemn the ongoing military attacks and new rounds of the invasion of the Gaza Strip by the Israeli regime against Palestinian civilians.

The Islamic Republic of Iran firmly believes that support for the cause of Palestine and the Palestinian people must continue until they are able to realize their fundamental rights, in particular their right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State of Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. Historical experience and recent developments have demonstrated that Palestinians have no choice but to continue their resistance against the occupation, the aggression and the blatant violations of their rights. As we have stated before, we are of the view that the return of all Palestinian refugees to their homeland and the holding of a referendum on self-determination represent the most effective and durable solution to the Palestinian question. Through a referendum, Palestinian Muslims, Jews and Christians will be able

to choose their own political system and enjoy their rights fairly and equally.

Having stated our principled position today, my delegation voted in favour of resolution ES-10/21, submitted at this tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, and considers it a demonstration of the international community's strong support for the cause of Palestine, particularly the Palestinian people's realization of their inalienable right to self-determination. Today's vote on both the resolution and the biased and politically motivated draft amendment proposed by Canada (A/ES-10/L.26) is important and shows strong international support for Palestinians and their right to self-determination. It also contradicts fabricated narratives that try to question the legitimacy of the Palestinian people's struggle, including their armed struggle, aimed at fulfilling those goals. Meanwhile, my delegation reiterates the Palestinian people's inherent right to self-defence in the face of the Israeli regime's continued brutality and hostility towards them. The right to self-defence, as recognized by international law and the Charter of the United Nations, extends to all Palestinians, including resistance movements such as Hamas, in their struggle against Israel's occupation and military aggression. Depriving Palestinians of those inherent rights is unacceptable as long as the occupation and military aggression persist.

While I have the floor, I would like to react to the references made in the statement by the representative of Canada to the Islamic Republic of Iran and its role in the region. Regrettably, he tried to whitewash Israel's aggression by shamelessly pointing his finger at Iran. Indeed, Canada has continued to stay on the wrong side of history by taking sides with the powers of darkness and through its vicious support to the military occupying Israeli regime, which is brutally massacring innocent people right now. The level of hypocrisy and double standards is disgusting. Canada and the United States are complicit in Israel's crimes, and they must be held to account before history. The actions taken by various Western countries, including the provision of direct financial, intelligence and military support to the Israeli regime, are a clear violation of the Charter and the international legal obligations of the United States, and mean that they must be held internationally responsible for the criminal acts by the Israeli regime. For the record, I should also like to recall that Canada will be held responsible sooner or later for the war crimes perpetrated by Canadian soldiers outside the chain of command against Muslims, especially in Afghanistan.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, while fully adhering to its international legal obligations, will continue to firmly support the Palestinian nation in its legitimate struggle for the full realization of its inalienable right to self-determination.

**Ms. Schwalger** (New Zealand): Today's outcome is an important example of the General Assembly's ability to discharge its collective responsibility to respond to questions of international peace and security. We voted in favour of resolution ES-10/21 after careful consideration. However, we are deeply disappointed that the resolution failed to identify Hamas as a terrorist entity or condemn its barbaric terror attacks on Israel on 7 October. As I said this morning (see A/ES-10/PV.40), we are appalled by the brutality, the targeting of civilians and the taking of hostages, which are clear violations of international law. Furthermore, the resolution would have benefited from a call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages and a reference to Israel's right to defend itself in full compliance with international law, including with regard to its actions in Gaza.

**Mr. Kimani** (Kenya): We voted in favour of resolution ES-10/21, on Gaza, and appreciate Jordan's consultative approach. The edits made to the draft text yesterday, acknowledging the 7 October terrorist attacks and the hostages taken by Hamas and reaffirming the importance of a two-State solution, met our minimum expectations. Our vote in favour is aimed at ensuring that the emergency humanitarian needs of Palestinians in Gaza are addressed. However, the resolution does not go far enough in being clear about the terrorist attacks by Hamas that have launched us on this disastrous course. For that reason, we sponsored and voted in favour of Canada's draft amendment A/ES-10/L.26, for its explicit condemnation of Hamas terrorism and hostage-taking.

With the world watching, once again, the General Assembly has taken action while the Security Council struggles to address threats to international peace and security. Each veto that contradicts the objective realities on the ground, underscores the urgent need for Security Council reform. Without significant reform, the credibility and legitimacy of the Council, as viewed by the global populace, will continue to diminish.

At the start of this debate, we listened closely to the representatives of Israel and Palestine. We were dismayed by their lack of empathy for each other's innocent civilian casualties. This entrenched partiality,

this failure to recognize the shared humanity on both sides, is a fundamental obstacle to resolving this protracted conflict.

On 7 October, Hamas terrorists infiltrated 22 Israeli locations using land, sea and air routes, launching thousands of rockets at civilian areas. They killed over 1,400 people, injured almost 5,000 and took 200 hostages. Our deepest condolences go out to the affected families and communities in Israel.

Almost every speech from this rostrum references international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions. While agreeing on the importance of universal adherence, it is crucial to emphasize that international and natural law fundamentally protect the unequivocal right to self-defence. This is particularly pertinent in the light of Hamas's actions on 7 October, which mirror its original 1988 charter's objective of eradicating Israel and its Jewish population. The attacks suggest that even the supposedly moderated 2017 charter revision, which maintained that "[r]esisting the occupation with all means and methods is a legitimate right", still harbours intentions to destroy Israel and its Jewish people. The hate-fuelled 7 October attack is abominable, and its underlying genocidal intent is fundamentally inhumane. It is vital for factions in Palestine, the region and the international community to unequivocally reject such heinous strategies.

Today Kenya condemns Hamas for the attack and demands the immediate release of all hostages and the cessation of its use of civilians as human shields.

Mindful of multiple Security Council resolutions, Kenya calls on all Member States to intensify their efforts to suppress the financing of groups that employ terrorism.

Like Israel after 7 October, Kenya knows the bitter aftermath of terrorist attacks only too well. We have endured the psychological torture of hearing the perpetrators attempt to justify the unjustifiable and to blame the victims who are our children, parents and siblings. We have experienced the searing anger and yearning for justice against those who intentionally harm our loved ones. We reject terrorism as a legitimate form of political resistance. We recognize the need to name and shame those who use terror to promote any cause.

This many decades later, we are still recovering from the wounds of colonial rule and the deep scars of the slave trade. We will never forget the decades we willingly endured immense suffering, including

massacres and even concentration camps, in our unyielding pursuit of independence and sovereignty. We can therefore relate to the raw feelings of anger and pain being felt by the people of Palestine for the lack of progress in negotiations to achieve the two-State solution. We also pay heed to the immense suffering of innocent Palestinian civilians. The lives of Palestinian people are as precious as those of all other peoples. Thousands of Palestinian civilians — including hundreds of children — have been killed by Israel's air barrage against Hamas. Critical civilian infrastructure is being destroyed. United Nations agencies on the ground are warning of a calamitous humanitarian situation in Gaza. We offer our deepest condolences to the affected families and all of Gaza and the West Bank. We also extend our condolences to the families and colleagues of humanitarian workers who have lost their lives in the line of duty, including the 38 United Nations staff members who have perished recently in Gaza.

Kenya thanks the United Nations and the Secretary-General in particular, Egypt, Jordan and other parties for the opening of the Rafah border crossing, but it is inadequate. It is imperative that Israel and neighbouring States unite to guarantee unhindered humanitarian aid and the delivery of vital services at the scale needed.

We call on Israel's military to take every precaution to protect civilians and critical civilian infrastructure from its military strikes.

We strongly condemn Hamas's tactic of hiding weapons in civilian areas. Using human shields is abhorrent and illegal. Those actions violate the fundamental values and laws upheld by the United Nations, highlighting the urgent need for a global resolution to the Palestinian question.

History teaches us that the response of States to terrorism, particularly when they make use of illegal means, can unintentionally lead to an era of escalated radicalization and violence. Much has been said about the 7 October attacks being Israel's 9/11. All of us can empathize with the desire for vengeance after the cruelties of terrorism have been visited on the innocent. Yet we must be wise enough to remember the terribly costly lessons learned from the worldwide responses to the Al-Qaida attacks here in New York two decades ago. We therefore strongly urge Israel to adhere to international humanitarian law and the laws of war today, so that it can maintain the legitimate opportunity to negotiate peace tomorrow.

The desire of the Palestinian people for their own land can never be extinguished. However, as long as Palestinians grow up in rage because their lives, dignity and talents are distorted by a punishing occupation, their just cause will struggle to be led by a legitimate resistance that rejects terrorism.

The attacks of 7 October and the aftermath in Gaza signal a pivotal moment. The status quo is no more. Two paths lie ahead: an escalating conflict with global repercussions or a renewed international commitment to a two-State solution and peaceful coexistence based on a credible, non-partisan and impartial process. This is the moment for courageous, inspired leadership that can keep its eye on the prospect for peace. Such leadership must desist from using the grave situation in Gaza to advance short-term geostrategic advantage or mobilize domestic constituencies, for to do so constitutes a betrayal to the Palestinian cause and an insult to Israeli and Palestinian lives lost. States that ardently support and sponsor both factions of this monumental conflict bear the responsibility to employ their influence and leverage in guiding the parties back to the negotiating table.

**Mrs. Zalabata Torres** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): As was expressed yesterday by the Vice-Minister of Multilateral Affairs of Colombia (see A/ES-10/PV.39), Colombia reaffirms its historic support for a peaceful, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestinian question on the basis of two States living side by side within safe borders, in accordance with relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

Colombia voted in favour of resolution ES-10/21, joining the broad majority which agreed in reaffirming the call for a ceasefire, for unlimited respect for international humanitarian law and for the protection of life, in accordance with the resolution just adopted.

Violence only begets violence and more loss of life, leaving in its wake an unfortunate and nefarious legacy for future generations. I reiterate the call made by President Gustavo Petro Urrego for an international peace conference aimed at reaching a definitive solution to the conflict.

**Ms. Joyini** (South Africa): South Africa voted in favour of resolution ES-10/21, on protecting civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations.

Like many in this Hall today, we are deeply disturbed by the harrowing images of the death, destruction and

turmoil that have engulfed Gaza as a result of Israel's bombardment of civilians, essential infrastructure and places of worship. As the international community, we must be united in calling for an immediate, comprehensive ceasefire. Humanitarian corridors should be opened immediately so that aid and other basic services can reach all in need. We call on all the parties to exercise restraint and for all States to refrain from fuelling what is an increasingly unjust war, including by supplying weapons to the parties. South Africa urges the United Nations to impose an arms embargo on all parties involved in the conflict, given the death and destruction we are witnessing every day. We also strongly support the Secretary-General's call for international humanitarian law to be upheld, for civilians to be protected and for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, as well as for preserving human dignity.

We express our condolences to the people of Palestine and Israel for the loss of life during the past three weeks. As an occupying Power, Israel has an added obligation under the Geneva Conventions regarding the people and territory it is occupying, including the prohibition of collective punishment. That represents the international system, based on respect for the rule of international law and international humanitarian law, which many in the Assembly have been arguing for. The targeting of civilians in armed conflicts, including the use of starvation and the destruction of civilian infrastructure, and all the other atrocities perpetuated by the occupying Power, including calling for wiping out a group of people, clearly constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. They are clear violations of international human rights law, international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, and must be investigated by the relevant international courts at our disposal.

We cannot ignore the fact that Israel's continued occupation of Palestine is bringing hatred, suffering and pain. We cannot proclaim the importance of international law and the importance of the Charter of the United Nations in some situations but not in others, as though the rule of law applied only to a select few. For international law to be credible, it should be uniformly applied and not selective. It is therefore unfortunate that the conflict has again shown the inadequacy of our institutions, in particular the Security Council, which has a mandate derived from the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security. A body of such stature has been found desperately wanting,

as it cannot even call for a humanitarian ceasefire to enable much-needed humanitarian supplies to go to those who need them most. We are deeply concerned about the events in the Council in recent days, which have demonstrated the aggravated politicization of a dire humanitarian situation during a time of need and desperation. That should be another wake-up call for all of us to work urgently for reform of the Council.

South Africa would like to join the others that have affirmed that the ultimate solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the establishment of two States, Palestine and Israel, living side by side in peace. The Palestinian State should be created along the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. As the international community, we have a responsibility to make every effort to create opportunities for comprehensive dialogue led and owned by the Palestinians and Israelis themselves. Peace between Palestine and Israel cannot be delayed any longer.

We would like to conclude by correcting a mistaken interpretation of the laws of war in situations of occupation. Occupation law is part of the laws of armed conflict. A State cannot simultaneously exercise control over territory that it occupies and militarily attack that territory based on a claim that it is foreign and poses an exogenous national security threat. The occupying Power can use tools applicable to the rule of law, including policing powers, to deal with criminal action. In this case, the notion of the right to self-defence been used erroneously and deliberately to justify extrajudicial killings and collective punishment, with many countries enabling and justifying those unlawful acts.

At the same time, we condemn the attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian groups on Israeli civilians. While oppressed and occupied peoples have a right to resist, including through armed resistance, that right has to be exercised within the limits imposed by the laws of war. The actions of Hamas since 7 October this year include war crimes and must be investigated, just as the heinous war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide perpetrated by the Israeli forces must be investigated. In all of those cases, those most responsible must be held accountable, and we call on the International Criminal Court to immediately indicate its plans to investigate the latest breaches of international law in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory.

While we are referencing the relevant provisions of the laws of war, we believe that war is a scourge. As the Organization created to save succeeding



generations from the scourge of war, we should work to change the global culture of violence to a culture where peace is valued, peaceful societies are nurtured and peacebuilders are venerated rather than warmongers and their related institutions and actors.

**Mr. Massari (Italy):** Let me first thank President Francis for convening this emergency special session.

I would like to begin by joining colleagues who have thanked the United Nations for its tireless efforts to de-escalate the conflict and help the populations affected on the ground. In the face of the stalemate in the Security Council, it is extremely important that the main deliberative organ of the United Nations can serve as a multilateral forum for discussion on the most pressing issue of the day, the conflict that has inflamed the Middle East since the horrific terrorist attacks on Israel launched by Hamas on 7 October.

Italy will continue to stand firmly in solidarity with Israel. For us, Israel's security is in no way negotiable. That is what the Italian Government at the highest level, from our Prime Minister to our Foreign Minister, has been stating all along. But we have also said that we should avoid falling into the trap of the terrorists responsible for the attacks on 7 October, who would like to turn the Middle East into an area of a clash of civilizations, religions and cultures. We will not allow that. While stating our full solidarity with Israel, Italy will continue to engage in its active, intense diplomacy aimed at building bridges with the moderate Arab States and our friends and partners, including the Palestinian Authority, in an attempt to build a peaceful environment in the region based on mutual respect and mutual recognition.

Italy abstained in the voting on the resolution that was adopted today (resolution ES-10/21). While we recognize the efforts on the part of our Arab partners who put the draft resolution forward, the improvements that they accepted to include in the text were unfortunately not enough for us to support it. It was missing three important elements.

First, it was missing an unequivocal condemnation in the strongest terms and without any ambiguity of the heinous 7 October attacks by Hamas against innocent Israeli civilians.

Secondly, it was missing the recognition of the legitimate right to self-defence of any State — of Israel, in this case — under attack. And that exercise of the right to self-defence should obviously be fully

compliant with international law and international humanitarian law.

Finally, the resolution did not mention in explicit, unambiguous terms the humanitarian imperative to immediately and unconditionally release all the hostages taken on 7 October and to treat them humanely.

We therefore could not support the resolution because of those three missing elements.

While the conflict is ongoing, our priority is to take all possible diplomatic efforts to enable the safe and unimpeded passage of aid, while firmly demanding the immediate and unconditional release of all the hostages, without preconditions. We also need to intensify our common efforts to prevent a spillover of the conflict beyond Gaza. The consequence of an expansion of the conflict would be unimaginable for the region and the entire world. The only way to avoid such a dangerous prospect is to promote the resumption of a political initiative for a concrete, structural, long-term solution with a precisely defined timeline, based on the two peoples/two States perspective. The Palestinian people must have the right to be a self-governing nation in freedom, alongside the State of Israel, of which the full right to existence and security must be unequivocally, unambiguously recognized.

**Ms. Zacarias (Portugal):** As the situation is raging and risks spiralling throughout the region, we are deeply disappointed that the use of the veto has so far hindered the Security Council from addressing the situation in Israel and Gaza, and we welcome the General Assembly's adoption today of resolution ES-10/21.

Portugal would like to once again reiterate its unequivocal condemnation of the terrorist attacks by Hamas and reaffirm its solidarity with Israel and recognition of its right to self-defence. Terrorism in all its forms should be condemned, and the hostages must be released immediately, without preconditions.

No matter the savagery of the worst terrorist attack in its history, Israel's actions must respect international humanitarian law. No party to an armed conflict is above international humanitarian law. Tragically, the civilian population, hospitals and United Nations facilities, including schools, and other critical and civilian infrastructure, are not being protected. The death toll on both sides is staggering. We cannot remain indifferent to the suffering of innocent victims — Israelis, Palestinians and other nationalities, including United Nations workers. At this moment, our collective priority should

be the protection of civilians and addressing the tragic humanitarian situation on the ground.

Portugal fully supports Secretary-General's call for a humanitarian ceasefire and commends his tireless advocacy for the opening of humanitarian corridors to enable aid to reach the population of Gaza. We commend the United Nations work on the ground and pay our respects to those who have died in the service of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

We also consider it crucial to prevent the spread of the conflict to the West Bank and beyond, either by accident or calculated action. We welcome and encourage the continuation of regional and international efforts, both in multilateral and bilateral spheres, to prevent a spillover.

We must return to the diplomatic track to break this cycle of violence and extremism. We must transform this moment of crisis into a moment of peace in the future, for both Israelis and Palestinians, and do our utmost to prevent anger and confrontation from prevailing. It is our collective responsibility to address the structural drivers of this conflict. That will require the renewed involvement of all relevant actors and a determined effort to implement the resolutions of the Security Council on the matter and set a clear and solid path to a Palestinian State, fulfilling the two-State solution.

Despite the efforts made by the co-sponsors of resolution ES-10/21, which we recognize, the resolution fails to condemn the appalling terrorist attack of 7 October by Hamas and the taking of hostages. We deeply regret that. Acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their motivations and whenever and by whomever they are committed. Hostage-taking constitutes a serious violation of the Geneva Conventions and a war crime under international criminal law. That is why we voted in favour of the Canadian draft amendment (A/ES-10/L.26) and regret that it was not adopted.

In the aftermath of Hamas's horrific attack, we shared in the grief of families and declared our solidarity with the Israeli people. It is out of that same humanity and belief in the inherent value of every human life that also compels us to support the Palestinian people, while acknowledging their suffering and the catastrophic reality in Gaza. The human tragedy unfolding before our eyes must be stopped now. No matter what, a humanitarian truce must be established immediately,

and all parties must comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law. That is the reason that Portugal voted in favour of the resolution — because our common humanity must prevail.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting.

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

**Mr. Mansour (Palestine):** Today, here in the General Assembly, the world's parliament, countries of principle and conscience — peace-loving nations — stood up and proved that the international community has not forsaken humanity, has not forfeited international law as the universal rules that apply to all of us, has not forsaken the promise, purposes and principles of the United Nations and has not abandoned the Palestinian people in these darkest hours, or forsaken their just cause for freedom and justice.

We are grateful to all countries that voted in support of resolution ES-10/21, introduced by Jordan and co-sponsored by 46 countries, expressing, by an overwhelming majority, support for this unequivocal call for an immediate humanitarian truce; a halt to all attacks on civilians; the protection of civilians; compliance with international law, including humanitarian law and human rights law, and the release of all civilians held captive. The resolution also calls for immediate and unimpeded humanitarian assistance, which is so desperately needed by our people in the Gaza Strip, where Israel not only continues its aggression, but is escalating its indiscriminate and savage attacks on innocent Palestinian children, woman and men as we speak.

The occupying Power has launched its ground invasion at the darkest time in Gaza, where it has cut electricity, Internet and all communications. And yet there are still some here who refuse to equally and unequivocally condemn the war crimes and crimes against humanity being perpetrated by Israel. But today we will not focus on such a regrettable stance; we will focus on the unequivocal message the Assembly has sent to our people, which is that the overwhelming majority of the people of the world stand with the people in the Gaza Strip. They bear witness to their suffering. They feel their pain. They have not forgotten them and will not forsake them.

We therefore express our sincere appreciation to our sisters and brothers in the Group of Arab States,

under the leadership of Jordan, and to our sisters and brothers in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, under the leadership of Mauritania, for their unwavering solidarity and efforts to ensure the adoption of this important and principled resolution — this vital resolution — as the Security Council, regrettably, remains deadlocked, failing to uphold its Charter duty to maintain international peace and security. We thank all our sisters and brothers from every region of the world for their principled support in favour of the resolution, entitled “Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations”. That is the true aim of the resolution.

We are one in seeking an end to the killing, trauma, terror and destruction. That of course is not something that the representative of the occupying Power will ever understand. He still comes here to this world body after it has clearly spoken and said “enough bullying and inciting”, trying to force everyone to accept their twisted criminal definition of self-defence — that is to massacre civilians and destroy a people. There is no such right in this world — not legally, not politically, not morally. There will never be. That is the message that was sent today by the General Assembly to him and anyone else who is attempting to rewrite international law, including the laws meant to protect civilians, including those who have been occupied, oppressed, blockaded, besieged and persecuted for so long.

This is the reality of the Palestinian people. This is the reality that we appeal to the Assembly to not lose sight of. We ask that it act now to give meaning to the resolution that was adopted today, with immediate, practical efforts to secure a humanitarian truce that will lead to a cessation of hostilities and secure the humanitarian aid needed for our people who are suffering in Gaza.

This is a catastrophic situation that requires immediate action. We must work now together to save civilian lives. It is deplorable, inhumane and unforgettable that more than 7,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed by Israel, among them more than 3,500 children. This is a crime against humanity. The world cannot stand by and watch as more innocent civilian lives are taken. In these grave hours, as Israel launched its ground invasion of Gaza today, we cannot hesitate to act together, swiftly and responsibly, to bring an end to this criminal and barbaric Israeli aggression.

Listen to the Secretary-General: this is a moment of truth. Listen to the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine

Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), who has lost more than 50 staff members in this aggression. Gaza is becoming the graveyard of a population trapped between war, siege and deprivation. That is what the Commissioner-General of UNRWA stated. Do not let that happen. The international community has to stop it. We have to stop it — all of us.

Listen to the cries of Palestinian mothers, fathers and children calling for an end to their oppression. Listen the billions of people around the world calling for an end to this injustice. Listen to the millions in the streets calling for humanity to prevail. Listen to every single country in our region, and so many around the world, that have taken principled positions here. The Assembly must listen to its conscience. And if that were not enough, listen to those who warn about where this will lead, if not stopped.

Lastly, we must act now to support the courageous service of the humanitarian workers on the ground — the staff of UNRWA, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and other United Nations agencies, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross and our own Palestinian Red Crescent, and Palestinian doctors, nurses and medics working around the clock to save lives.

We pay special tribute to the Palestinian national staff of UNRWA and other humanitarian agencies working to care for their brothers and sisters, and to our journalists who insist on telling the world the truth about what is happening in Gaza and all over Palestine. Although their lives are directly threatened and targeted by the Israeli aggression, they insist on choosing life over death. That is the Palestinian ethos that carries us through even these darkest of times.

We want life now, justice now and freedom now. We want peace now. Enough is enough. I also want to give special thanks for, and pay tribute to, the principled, humane and passionate position of the President of the General Assembly, who has conducted our deliberations with humanity, principles and professionalism. We salute and thank him.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker for this meeting. We shall hear the remaining speakers in Tuesday, 31 October, at 3 p.m. in this Hall.

*The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.*