

DSC/RC/HC Alakbarov

Remarks to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee Ministerial Meeting

20 April 2026

Foreign Minister Eide,

High Representative Kallas,

Prime Minister Mustafa,

I also recognize the presence of High Representative Mladenov and thank him for his efforts to advance the implementation of Phase Two of the Comprehensive Plan for Gaza.

Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

It is a pleasure to address this Ministerial Meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee at this critical moment for Palestine, Israel, and for stability and peace for all the Middle East.

While global attention is focused on the recent regional hostilities, we must redouble our efforts to address the dangerous and deteriorating dynamics on the ground across the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The ceasefire in Gaza remains highly fragile. Almost the entire population of Gaza is still displaced, with most living in overcrowded, unsafe, and unsanitary conditions. Scabies and rodent infestation are a reality. Families face the grim prospect of yet another winter in tents if we do not act quickly. Nearly 84 per cent of Gaza's population live in overcrowded displacement sites far below minimum humanitarian standards.

This humanitarian crisis is now threatening to become entrenched. After two years of brutal war and horrific deprivation, the people of Gaza deserve better.

The UN and its partners maintain a strong presence in Gaza. Some 200 international and at nearly 12,000 national staff are delivering daily relief. Each month, at least 1.1 million people receive food parcels and some 358,000 children access temporary education. The UN supports water and waste services for 2.1 million people, clears more than 1,500 tons of debris daily, and provided shelter and non-food items to a quarter of a million people last month. Hospitals remain functional through fuel and essential drugs.

But severe constraints persist. No local supplies remain, and urgent entry of dual use items, including generators, construction and repair materials, engines, pipes, and waste treatment chemicals, all these are critical items. More crossings must open for humanitarian and private sector goods.

For 2026, partners have appealed for 4.2 billion USD for the entire OPT, with 2.9 billion for the next 6 months. To date, 454 million USD (11 percent) has been received, plus 30 million USD outside the appeal. The EU and EU member states are the largest contributors, followed by UAE, Japan, UK, Switzerland, Qatar and Norway.

But humanitarian assistance will not be enough. To secure a better future for Palestinians in Gaza, we must progress rapidly beyond life-saving assistance, towards recovery and reconstruction.

The needs are immense. According to the Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, released today by the European Union, the World Bank, and the United Nations, an estimated \$71.4 billion will be needed for recovery and reconstruction, including \$ 26.3 billion required in the first eighteen months to restore essential services, rebuild critical infrastructure, and support economic recovery.

The enabling framework for this process has been established. United Nations Security Council Resolution 2803 sets out clear elements for Gaza's transition, which must be implemented in full. This includes: the disarmament of Hamas and all other armed groups in Gaza; the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Strip and the deployment of the International Stabilization Force; the transfer of transitional governance responsibilities to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza; and an inclusive reconstruction process, led by Palestinians, that can restore dignity and hope to the population.

This is the transitional framework accepted by the parties and endorsed by the international community. Much depends on its success and we must work collectively to support its implementation on the basis of international law and consistent with well-established principles, including the right to Palestinian self-determination.

This will require robust coordination between the Office of the High Representative, the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, and the Palestinian Authority. I welcome in that regard the establishment of the Liaison Office between the OHR and the Palestinian Authority and look forward to its quick operationalization. The United Nations stands ready to support these efforts in line with our mandate.

Ultimately, recovery in Gaza must lay the foundation to advance broader political objectives: the full reunification of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank under a single, legitimate, sovereign Palestinian government, and a restored political process that will ultimately end the occupation and establish two-State solution in line with relevant Security Council resolutions and previous agreements.

Excellencies,

While Gaza commands our urgent attention, it cannot be treated in isolation. The prospects for stability and recovery in Gaza are inextricably linked to developments in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Unfortunately, across the West Bank, the situation is deteriorating day by day.

The advancement of illegal settlements and related infrastructure is accelerating at an unprecedented pace. Israel's decision to resume land registration in the West Bank threatens

to further dispossess Palestinians of their property and risks expanding Israeli control over the land.

Unchecked settler violence has reached devastating levels, spreading across the West Bank and becoming increasingly brutal and deadly. Entire villages are now living in constant fear of the next attack.

The Palestinian Authority faces an existential fiscal crisis that threatens the institutional foundations of a future sovereign Palestinian State. The unilateral withholding of clearance revenues, amounting to approximately US\$4.5 billion withheld by end-2025. Total public debt has reached US\$14.6 billion—over 105 per cent of GDP. While international support helped offset some of this burden, such measures are not sustainable. It is important that Israel releases these funds as soon as possible.

Mounting pressures on correspondent banking arrangements risk further undermining the financial system. No degree of domestic reform will be sufficient to offset the impact of withheld clearance revenues and restrictive economic and financial measures.

Against this dire backdrop, recent diplomatic initiatives have provided a path forward. The Saudi-French Initiative, referenced in Resolution 2803, the New York Declaration, endorsed by the General Assembly, and the Global Alliance set out a high-level reform agenda. This political commitment must now be translated into concrete policy steps on the ground, backed by sustained on-budget support from international donors.

In line with its global practice, the United Nations is working to support collective action in this regard. Recently, we launched the Horizon Fund, co-chaired by Prime Minister Mustafa and myself. This Fund will enable the United Nations to implement principled, coherent early recovery planning, utilizing our extensive presence and capacities across the whole of Palestine, in alignment with UN resolutions and international law. I would like to recognize, with deep appreciation, the pledge of 5 million Euros made to the Fund by His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Netherlands.

I would also like to highlight the Palestinian local elections that are taking place on 25 April throughout the West Bank and in Deir-al Baleh, Gaza. This process is proceeding despite severely constrained political, security, and humanitarian conditions, and it should be actively supported.

We look forward to engaging further with Member States and other stakeholders as we work collectively to support a better future for Palestinians.

At the last meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee in September, the UN warned that the immense pressures exerted on the Oslo framework and the Palestinian Authority were threatening the viability of the two-State solution. This remains the case today.

And your attention to this matter is critical.

In recent months, the international community has reaffirmed its long-held commitment to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through peaceful means. Security Council Resolution 2803 made clear that dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis – not violence – is the only path to a better future. The New York Declaration articulated a credible path towards Palestinian sovereignty and statehood.

The United Nations will continue to support all efforts towards a peaceful, just, and durable resolution to the conflict, in line with international law and previous agreements.

Thank you.