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BRIEFING TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL
ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

28 April 2026

Mister President,

Members of the Security Council,

I am briefing you today at a moment of profound regional tension and instability, which is impacting the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions across the region and beyond.

The tensions and hostilities that have upended the Middle East over the past weeks have shifted attention from the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Away from the spotlight, the situation in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is steadily worsening. The population in Gaza faces ongoing and deadly Israeli strikes and dire humanitarian conditions, while in the West Bank, violence including rampant settler violence, displacement, and accelerating settlement activity are threatening entire communities and further eroding the prospects for a political process that will resolve the conflict on the basis of a viable two-State solution.

Mister President,

In Gaza, the ceasefire is increasingly fragile as Israeli strikes and armed activities by Hamas and other groups continue. While diplomatic efforts are ongoing with the goal of consolidating the ceasefire and implementing Phase II of the Comprehensive Plan endorsed by the UN Security Council in Resolution 2803 (2025), talks on the disarmament of Hamas and other armed groups have thus far not resulted in an agreement, raising concerns over the potential return to widespread hostilities.

Civilians continue to bear the brunt of the ongoing violence. According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, since the ceasefire began, approximately 800 Palestinians, including more than 200 children, and seven humanitarian personnel, have been killed as a result of Israeli airstrikes,

shelling and gunfire. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has stated that its strikes have targeted Hamas militants and facilities.

Meanwhile, the humanitarian needs on the ground remain overwhelming. Some 1.8 million people – nearly the entire population of Gaza – are displaced and living in IDP camps, and are dependent on aid amid ongoing hostilities, devastated infrastructure, and rising public health risks. While some improvements in access and aid delivery have been observed in recent weeks, unpredictable access, limited operational crossings, and restrictions on critical humanitarian items termed “dual-use” items by Israel continue to constrain the UN response. Food security remains a challenge, while essential services — particularly water, sanitation, and health — are again on the brink of collapse.

Plans must be advanced urgently, not only for humanitarian aid, but also for early recovery and reconstruction. On 20 April, the UN and the European Union released the final Gaza Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA), conducted jointly with the World Bank. According to the assessment, recovery and reconstruction needs in Gaza are estimated at USD 71.4 billion over the next decade, including USD 26.3 billion required in the first 18 months to restore essential services, rebuild critical infrastructure, and support economic recovery.

To begin addressing the staggering needs across the OPT, the United Nations has recently launched the Horizon Fund, co-chaired by Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa and Deputy Special Coordinator Ramiz Alakbarov. This Fund will enable the United Nations to implement early recovery planning, across the entire OPT, in line with UN resolutions and international law. We deeply appreciate Member States’ contributions to the fund to date.

In order to advance recovery, the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG) must be allowed to fulfill its governance and administrative roles as outlined in UNSCR 2803 in coordination with the Palestinian Authority, while the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan are implemented in full. These include the disarmament of Hamas and all other armed groups in Gaza, Israeli withdrawal from the Strip and the deployment of the International Stabilization Force.

Mister President,

Turning to the West Bank, between 14 March and 16 April, Israeli authorities advanced plans for 1,080 housing units in the West Bank, including 680 in several settlements in Area C and a plan for 400 housing units in East Jerusalem. On 25 March, the Israeli cabinet approved 34 settlements across Area C. These include new settlements, regularization of existing outposts and neighborhoods of existing settlements – representing the most extensive such approval to date in a single cabinet decision.

During the reporting period, 21 Palestinians, including six children, were killed by Israeli forces or settlers in the West Bank, and 310, including 45 children were injured. According to Israeli sources, one Israeli was killed and 11 injured, including one woman, in Palestinian attacks against Israelis.

The frequency and severity of settler attacks continue to increase. Entire Palestinian communities now routinely facing lethal violence, vandalism and harassment, often in the presence of Israeli soldiers or with their participation. I note of recent expressions of concern by some Israeli officials regarding settler violence and call on the authorities to take immediate action to stop the violence.

The situation in northern West Bank refugee camps remains alarming. Israeli military operations and access restrictions have led to the prolonged displacement of more than 33,000 residents from Jenin, Tulkarm, and Nur Shams refugee camps. These camps remain largely empty, marking the largest and longest displacement crisis in the West Bank in decades.

Mister President,

Economic conditions across the West Bank also continue to deteriorate. Rising costs, limited access to employment, and movement restrictions are undermining livelihoods and increasing reliance on humanitarian assistance.

The Palestinian Authority faces an existential fiscal crisis that threatens the institutional foundations of a future independent Palestinian State. Nine months of withheld clearance revenues, public debt exceeding US\$14 billion, and mounting pressures on correspondent banking arrangements leave the Palestinian Authority without the fiscal tools required to sustain itself.

Mister President,

On a positive note, on 25 April, Palestinians seized an important opportunity to exercise their democratic rights by participating in local elections in most of the West Bank and in Deir al-Balah in the Gaza Strip. The United Nations commends the Palestinian Central Elections Commission for its credible administration of the electoral process given the significant challenges present in the West Bank and the extraordinarily difficult conditions prevailing in Gaza. The United Nations remains committed to supporting and strengthening Palestinian institutions and promoting democratic governance.

Mister President,

Turning to the region, the United Nations welcomes the 3-week extension of the cessation of hostilities between Israel and Lebanon and the ongoing talks, facilitated by the United States. We remain ready to support these efforts and continue to urge the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 toward a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution to the conflict.

On the ground, the situation remains extremely fragile amid ongoing violence, with continued strikes by Hizbullah and Israel, violations of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the possession of weapons outside of Lebanese state authority. We urge all actors to exercise maximum restraint, fully respect the cessation of hostilities and to comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, at all times. There is no military solution to this conflict. Diplomacy is the path toward sustainable peace.

Six peacekeepers, four Indonesian and two French, serving with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) have been killed since the 2nd of March, with several more injured. We reiterate our strong condemnation of all attacks on peacekeepers and extend our deepest condolences to their family and friends, as well as to the Governments and people of Indonesia and France. Attacks on peacekeepers are unacceptable and must be promptly investigated, and those responsible must be held accountable. The safety and security of UN personnel and the inviolability of UN property must be respected by all.

On the Golan, the Israel Defense Forces remained on the Bravo side and currently maintain eleven positions - eight in the area of separation and three in the area of limitation in the vicinity of the Bravo line. The IDF continues to carry out operations on the Bravo side, including night search operations in villages and in some cases detaining civilians. Some of the civilians

were released following interrogations by the Israel Defense Forces while others remain in detention in Israel.

Mister President,

Resolving the Israeli–Palestinian conflict remains central to achieving durable peace in the region, as it continues to fuel instability across the Middle East. The meetings on 20 April of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) underscored the ongoing commitment of the international community to preserving what has been built over the past decades, identifying and reversing the deeply destructive current trends on the ground, and finding ways to translate political will into concrete policy steps on the ground, backed by financial commitments.

Despite the current challenges, and as also emphasized in the Global Alliance and AHLC meetings, there is no alternative to a political solution. A political framework that clearly advances the parties towards an end to the occupation and the achievement of a viable two-State solution is essential both to sustainably addressing the urgent needs on the ground, and to achieving a just and lasting peace.

The United Nations remains committed to supporting all efforts towards this goal.

Thank you.