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

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As Delivered

Mister President,

Members of the Security Council,

I would first like to acknowledge the presence of High Representative Mladenov, and thank him for his tireless efforts to advance the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan in Gaza.

As I brief you today, the situation across the Occupied Palestinian Territory is increasingly precarious. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, settlement expansion, settler-related violence, and incitement continue to drive tensions.

In Gaza, delays in the implementation of UNSCR 2803, alongside daily violence and a continuing humanitarian crisis, have replaced the early momentum following the ceasefire.

As talks on advancing to Phase II of the ceasefire continue, calls are emerging in some circles for a resumption of hostilities. This would have disastrous consequences for the population of Gaza. Let me be clear: the people of Gaza cannot take more war. This scenario must be avoided at all costs.

The implementation of Resolution 2803 cannot wait. All elements of the Comprehensive Plan are interconnected and must be implemented in full. These include the disarmament of Hamas and other armed groups, Israeli withdrawal, and deployment of the International Stabilization Force. The National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG) must be enabled to take up its transitional responsibilities in coordination with the Palestinian Authority.

Mr. President,

As diplomatic efforts continue, people's lived reality in Gaza is marked by deep uncertainty. Israeli strikes continue on a nearly daily basis, killing dozens during the reporting period, alongside armed activity by Hamas and other Palestinian groups. Israeli authorities have said that strikes by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have targeted Hamas militants and related infrastructure. The Israeli Government said that it now controls 60 percent of Gaza, up from 52 percent since the ceasefire.

Humanitarian conditions remain acute, and the population remains dependent on daily aid delivery. The reopening of Zikim crossing in mid-April, and a limited increase in the volume of aid, are welcome improvements. However, humanitarian operations remain heavily constrained by limited operational crossings, restrictions on critical humanitarian items that Israel considers "dual-use".

In recent days, the entry of pest control chemicals has helped facilitate rodent control operations to improve hygiene conditions. However, critical shortages of fuel, engine oil, spare parts and pesticides are disrupting essential services, heightening public health risks.

Funding equally remains highly constrained. As of today, the humanitarian response plan for the OPT, estimated at USD 4.06 billion, has received only USD 540 million.

Last week, during my visit to Gaza, I witnessed the impact of all these obstacles and many more. Yet there were also signs of resilience and renewal. I visited a women-led household garden providing fresh food for the family and local market. I spoke with women's organizations about their efforts to advance Gaza's recovery. And I heard from the "Gaza We Want" Children's Committee, whose message was clear: the children of Gaza deserve to live. They deserve to enjoy their basic rights. They deserve a Gaza free from violence and deprivation, where they can build a brighter future, together with their families. We must do everything we can to make this a reality.

Mr. President,

To do so, we must put in place the mechanisms to enable a sustainable recovery, in line with Security Council Resolution 2803.

The UN will continue to provide urgently needed humanitarian assistance and lay the groundwork for early and long-term recovery. The recently published RDNA, carried out jointly with the European Union and the World Bank, detailed the scope of our collective task, and the recent meetings of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee and the Global Alliance in Brussels helped shape a coordinated approach towards the formidable challenges ahead. The UN continues to engage with the mediators, the Board of Peace and others across the region working to improve the situation on the ground.

The UN Early Recovery Trust Fund (Horizon Fund), established jointly with the PA, is a critical vehicle for our collective efforts to significantly scale up early recovery in an effective, accountable, and transparent manner. I wish to express my deep appreciation to France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Switzerland for their commitment.

Ultimately, recovery in Gaza must advance the underlying political objectives: the reunification of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank under a single, legitimate, sovereign Palestinian government, and a restored political process that will end the unlawful occupation and realize a two-State solution in line with relevant Security Council resolutions, international law, and previous agreements.

Mister President,

Meanwhile, the situation in the West Bank continues to deteriorate. During the reporting period, Israeli planning authorities advanced two plans for over 640 housing units in Area C of the West Bank. In East Jerusalem, the planning authorities advanced a plan for over 1,620 housing units in the settlement of Pisgat Zeev.

During the reporting period, five Palestinians, including two children, were killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank, and 156, including 20 children were injured by Israeli forces or settlers. According to Israeli sources, seven Israelis were injured, including one five year-old child and two soldiers, in Palestinian attacks against Israelis.

Throughout the West Bank, the frequency and severity of settler attacks have significantly increased in 2026, with some 220 Palestinian communities having faced attacks, which are increasingly leading to the displacement of entire communities.

On a recent visit to the Jordan Valley with members of the diplomatic community, I witnessed firsthand the devastating consequences of settler violence, destruction of Palestinian property and increasing access restrictions.

I urge the Israeli authorities to take urgent and concrete steps to stop these intensifying attacks and hold perpetrators accountable.

In response to the mounting violence and rapidly expanding settlement footprint, on 11 May, the European Union announced sanctions on “Israeli extremist settlers and entities” as well as on “leading Hamas figures.”

In East Jerusalem, the annual Jerusalem Day “flag march” through the Old City was accompanied, as in previous years, by acts of violence and racist chants by Israeli participants towards Palestinian residents. There were also instances of Israeli senior officials and Members of Knesset appearing to violate the status quo at the Holy Sites. As in previous years, hundreds of Israeli and Palestinian activists also organized teams to prevent and contain violence, and to protect Palestinians and their property from attacks.

Palestinian officials and political figures have also continued to use inflammatory language against Israel.

Separately, on 17 May, the Government of Israel approved plans to establish an IDF museum and recruitment centre and an office for the Israeli Defence Minister on the UNRWA compound in Sheikh Jarrah, following its earlier seizure and partial demolition by Israeli authorities. The Secretary-General strongly condemned this decision.

On 25 April Palestinian local elections were held across West Bank, as well as in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza. Despite the many challenges in the West Bank, and dire humanitarian conditions in Gaza, the Central Elections Commission delivered an orderly process, demonstrating notable institutional resilience. The United Nations stands ready to support future electoral processes in line with commitments made by the Palestinian Authority.

Mister President,

In recent months, my colleagues and I have briefed this Council about the potential for progress towards a sustainable political solution. Security Council Resolution 2803 created a crucial window of opportunity. We now have the collective responsibility to ensure its implementation.

We cannot ignore the current alarming trends, or their dire implications for Palestinians, Israelis, and the entire region. This is the moment to take urgent steps to reverse these dangerous dynamics.

Many are still tirelessly pursuing peaceful solutions. On 30 April, thousands gathered in Tel Aviv for the People’s Peace Summit, calling for an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a political agreement. As the peace activists Aziz Abu Sarah and Maoz Inon reminded us in their book, “The Future Is Peace”: even those who have endured profound personal loss in this conflict can choose reconciliation over revenge and work to build peace from the ground up.

We must urgently work to return the parties to a path towards an end to the occupation and the conflict in the context of a two-State solution. The United Nations will continue to support Palestinians and Israelis in achieving this goal.

Thank you.