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

29 June 2026

Madam President, Members of the Security Council,

Today's briefing is focused on the Secretary-General's quarterly report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016), as circulated to Council members last week.

Since the 12 June cutoff date for the written report, the situation across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory – in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has remained volatile.

Israeli airstrikes and military operations have continued across Gaza, resulting in further fatalities and bringing the total killed since the ceasefire to over 1,000, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health.

Israeli forces continue to expand the scope of their territorial control in Gaza, and the extension of areas requiring coordination for humanitarian operations. Israel has said that it currently controls approximately 70% of the Gaza Strip.

This encroachment of areas under Israeli control is reducing the space available to civilians. Palestinians in Gaza are concentrated in increasingly limited areas, living amid insecurity and violence.

As the Emergency Relief Coordinator briefed this Council on 18 June, since the adoption of Security Council resolution 2803, there have been improvements in the humanitarian situation in Gaza. The share of households going to bed hungry dropped from 92 to 36 percent, and humanitarians were able to expand provision of water, health and education services.

But as Under-Secretary-General Fletcher said, Resolution 2803 and the Comprehensive Plan are meant to deliver much more than that, while the needs in Gaza remain immense. Sanitation conditions remain alarming. Seventy per cent of the population lacks dignified shelter. Humanitarians continue to face persistent constraints as they carry out their essential work.

I am deeply concerned by reports of intimidation in the context of protests which were planned in Gaza on 26 June. Civilians must be able to exercise their rights peacefully, without fear, and must be protected at all times.

The legitimate needs, concerns, and aspirations of the people of Gaza must be addressed through the full implementation of Resolution 2803. This includes the disarmament of Hamas and all other armed groups in Gaza; the withdrawal of the Israel Defence Forces and deployment of the International Stabilization Force; and the transfer of governance responsibilities to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza. In coordination with the Palestinian Authority, the UN is ready to support the Committee in providing critical public services, and in laying the groundwork for reconstruction to restore dignity, improve living conditions, and offer hope for the future.

I welcome last week's joint visit to Gaza by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch and the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. Amid ongoing deprivation and suffering, their visit sent a timely signal of peace, tolerance, and dignity for all.

Meanwhile, the situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has continued to deteriorate.

Israeli military activity continued in and around the refugee camps in Jenin and Tulkarm in the northern West Bank, resulting in the evacuation and displacement of Palestinian households, including refugee families. This activity, including the reported establishment of an Israeli military post in Jenin, remains especially concerning as it is taking place in Area A, which falls under Palestinian Authority civil and security control.

On 17 June, Israeli authorities reportedly approved the expansion of a building used as a yeshiva in Hebron's H2 area. The approval followed the transfer of planning authority from the Hebron Municipality to the Israeli Civil Administration, in line with the Israeli Security Cabinet decision of 8 February.

Yesterday, 28 June, the indemnity waiver issued by the Israeli Ministry of Finance permitting correspondent banking relations between Israeli and Palestinian banks was extended for another two weeks, until 12 July.

On 14 June, President Abbas issued a decree amending the General Elections law. Among other changes, the decree increased the number of seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council, lowered the electoral threshold for winning seats, and required the inclusion of at least one woman among every three candidates on a list. The decree also committed to holding presidential elections in 2027.

Madam President,

Allow me to highlight some of the Secretary-General's observations from the report on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016).

I reiterate the Secretary-General's strong condemnation of the relentless expansion and acceleration of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. These developments further entrench the unlawful Israeli occupation and threaten the viability of a fully independent, contiguous, and sovereign Palestinian State. All Israeli settlements and related infrastructure have no legal validity, constitute a flagrant violation of international law, and must cease immediately.

I am deeply concerned by the steps taken by Israeli authorities to implement formal land registration in Area C. There is a serious risk that this decision will facilitate further settlement expansion and entrenchment of the unlawful occupation. I am also concerned by broader measures aimed at deepening Israeli administrative and territorial control of the West Bank. Along with the threat of annexation, which would have no legal validity, these actions are steadily transforming geographic and demographic realities across the West Bank and further undermining the prospects for a two-State solution.

The escalating violence and tensions in the West Bank are highly concerning. I condemn all violence against civilians, including acts of terror.

I echo the Secretary-General's deep concern over persistent and intensifying settler attacks. I also remain deeply concerned by ongoing attacks by Palestinians against Israelis. All perpetrators must be held accountable.

I also reiterate the Secretary-General's alarm over the scale of displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank. Settler violence, access restrictions, demolitions and prolonged security operations have resulted in the largest displacement crisis in the West Bank since 1967.

I am appalled at the numerous instances in which officials glorified violence and engaged in dangerous provocations, incitement, and inflammatory language. All incitement to violence must stop immediately.

I share the Secretary-General's concern over growing threats to the status quo at the Holy Sites in Jerusalem. I reiterate that the status quo must be respected and upheld, in line with the special and historic role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

I echo the Secretary-General in condemning in the strongest terms the Israeli authorities' decision to establish military facilities at the UNRWA Sheikh Jarrah compound in East Jerusalem. I urge the Government of Israel to rescind its decision and immediately return to the United Nations the UNRWA Sheikh Jarrah compound. I also urge Member States to continue to politically support and financially sustain UNRWA.

Despite the ceasefire announced eight months ago, Gaza still faces profound uncertainty and immense human suffering. I condemn the continued killing and injury of civilians in Gaza, including women and children. I am particularly concerned by recent increasing calls for a resumption of widespread hostilities in Gaza. This would be disastrous for the Palestinian people of Gaza, for Israelis, and for the entire region.

I reiterate the Secretary-General's deep concern over the humanitarian situation in Gaza. I call on all parties to facilitate the full, rapid, and unimpeded passage of humanitarian assistance. The provision of humanitarian aid must never be used as a bargaining chip.

I welcome the continued commitment of the international community to supporting the Palestinian Authority and advancing concrete steps towards the realization of a two-State solution. I urge the international community to continue supporting the Palestinian Authority to strengthen its governance capacity, implement reforms, and address its fiscal challenges as it prepares it to reassume its full responsibilities in Gaza, in line with Security Council resolution 2803 (2025).

I join the Secretary-General in reiterating the UN's strong commitment to supporting Palestinians and Israelis in ending the occupation and resolving the conflict in line with international law, relevant United Nations resolutions, and bilateral agreements in pursuit of the vision of two States – Israel and a fully independent, democratic, contiguous, viable and sovereign Palestinian State, of which Gaza is an integral part – living side by side in peace and security within secure and recognized borders, on the basis of the pre-1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States.

Thank you.