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PROCESS

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 am briefing you today as the situation in the West Bank is rapidly deteriorating as we have witnessed in the last few days. This is compounding the already alarming conditions across the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, with a wider escalation increasingly likely unless immediate steps are taken to reverse course.

Mister President,

Let me also state at the beginning that the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and Security Council resolution 2803 (2025) must be implemented in full. This includes disarmament of Hamas and all armed groups, IDF withdrawal from Gaza, deployment of the International Stabilization Force (ISF), and the transfer of governance responsibilities to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG).

Mister President,

Earlier this month, I visited Gaza to assess humanitarian conditions and progress towards early recovery. The situation in Gaza has improved somewhat – but progress is far too slow.

Recent weeks have seen some welcome progress in clearing solid waste from key areas and coordinating the entry of desperately needed sanitation equipment and supplies. I would like to recognize the facilitation of COGAT in this regard.

These are positive steps, but they remain highly insufficient in the face of the immense needs on the ground. During my recent visit, I witnessed immense hardship amid continued displacement, overcrowded living conditions, widespread destruction, and near-daily casualties caused by ongoing Israeli military operations. Yet I also saw Palestinians in Gaza taking courageous steps against all odds to start rebuilding their lives.

Health workers continue treating patients and rehabilitating clinics in extraordinarily difficult conditions. Community organizations are helping displaced families access shelter, education and health services. Local actors are attempting to restore basic services in coordination with UN agencies and other humanitarian partners. At every stop on my visit, I met people determined to improve the lives of their families and communities. Their resilience is inspiring and provides a rare glimmer of hope for what the future could hold.

I need to repeat my message to the Council; human dignity should not be conditional. The space for recovery has so far been denied. Community resilience cannot substitute for the required supply of materials at scale – including those Israel considers dual use – or for the political will to set Gaza on the path to a genuine recovery.

As you have heard from the announcement earlier, the Integrated Phase Classification report released last week showed improvements in food security and nutrition in Gaza. But the situation remains highly fragile, and most families across the Strip are still relying on humanitarian assistance as their only lifeline. With winter approaching the window to provide an effective response to pressing shelter needs is closing fast.

Mister President,

At the same time, the increase in Israeli airstrikes and the expansion of territory under the Israeli military's control continues to increase pressure on the population in Gaza, which is now confined to around a third of Gaza.

Gaza remains a dangerous place for the UN to operate and deliver aid. I reiterate that under international humanitarian law, all parties must respect and protect civilians and humanitarian personnel, facilities and relief supplies, and refrain from actions that obstruct humanitarian operations.

Mister President,

Humanitarian assistance on its own cannot put Gaza on a sustainable track. As we work to increase access and availability of aid, we must accelerate the transition to early recovery by restoring livelihoods, rehabilitating essential infrastructure, providing dignified shelter, and supporting Palestinian institutions capable of leading recovery and reconstruction. The framework for doing so is clear and has been endorsed by this Council in resolution 2803. It must be implemented without any delay.

This will require the parties to fulfill their commitments, as well as enhanced coordination between all stakeholders, including between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and NCAG. In this regard, I take note of the steps taken by Israeli authorities on 26 July to enable the deployment of the ISF to Gaza. These efforts must be guided by the political goal of reunifying the West Bank and Gaza under a single legitimate, sovereign Palestinian Government, ending the unlawful occupation and restoring a political process towards a viable two-State solution. Israel's legitimate security concerns must be addressed.

I am encouraged by the ongoing meeting of the Global Alliance in Rome, as well as the second convening of the Palestine Donor Group in Brussels on 13 July, in which I participated with UN colleagues. The meeting, co-chaired by the European Union and the PA, demonstrated broad international consensus on the need for close coordination on the implementation of resolution 2803.

Mister President,

Building a viable future for Gaza will not be possible if the PA is pushed to the brink of collapse, or if the current dangerous dynamics in the West Bank are left unchecked.

In the past week, the escalating violence in the West Bank has resulted in civilian casualties, displacement, damage to property, and growing insecurity across affected communities. Israeli settler attacks against Palestinian communities, homes, places of worship and civilian infrastructure have persisted at alarming levels. Attacks by Palestinians targeting Israelis have also resulted in civilian casualties, as well as damage to property.

On 23 July, two Palestinians, including a child, were killed in confrontations with Israeli settlers following a fire on agricultural land southeast of Nablus.

The following day, violent incidents in Palestinian communities southwest of Nablus resulted in the killing of four Palestinians and two Israelis, injuries to several others, and extensive damage to Palestinian property.

I urge Israel to take immediate and effective measures to prevent settler violence, protect Palestinian communities, and ensure that all perpetrators are held accountable.

Palestinians must unequivocally reject violence and incitement and take all necessary measures to prevent attacks against Israelis.

Israeli military operations, demolitions, and displacement of Palestinians also continued, while Israeli authorities imposed further movement restrictions and accelerated settlement expansion efforts.

On 14 July, Finance Minister Smotrich announced that the Israeli Security Cabinet had allocated 1.3 billion Shekels towards the placement of temporary housing units in dozens of new settlements throughout the West Bank, prior to the approval of formal Israeli plans for these settlements. He later announced the approval for the establishment of a new settlement in the northern West Bank, where Israel had previously evacuated settlers as part of the 2005 disengagement plan.

I reiterate that all settlements are illegal under international law.

I call upon all parties to take urgent steps to reverse the dangerous trajectory in the West Bank.

I am deeply concerned by the unauthorized entry of Israeli forces and officials into the UNRWA Kalandia Training Centre in East Jerusalem yesterday while classes were in session. UN premises are inviolable and immune from any form of interference.

Mister President,

The PA's fiscal situation remains critical as Israel continues to withhold Palestinian clearance revenues. The PA is currently unable to deliver many critical public services, including education and health services, or pay full salaries to its civil servants.

Preserving viable correspondent banking arrangements is essential to maintaining Palestinian financial stability and economic activity. I welcome recent steps by Israeli authorities to facilitate the extension of these arrangements. However, Israeli correspondent banks have

indicated they intend to terminate banking arrangements in the coming months. I urge continued engagement by all parties to avoid further deterioration, which would be disastrous.

On 9 July, Palestinian President Abbas issued a decree setting the date of the next Palestinian legislative elections across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza on 28 November. I welcome this announcement and reiterate that an inclusive and credible electoral process would represent an important step towards strengthening governance and responding to the aspirations of the Palestinian people.

I encourage all stakeholders to work towards creating the conditions necessary for these elections to take place, including the participation of all eligible Palestinian voters.

The UN stands ready to support Palestinian efforts in this regard, in coordination with the Central Elections Commission.

Mister President,

This conflict continues to unfold amid wider regional tensions that impact levels of funding, the availability of supply lines, as well as security and political dimensions, highlighting the urgent need for de-escalation and sustained efforts to promote just and durable regional peace and stability.

The Trilateral Framework between the US, the State of Israel, and the Republic of Lebanon, announced on 26 June, constitutes a milestone in efforts to end decades of conflict and advance lasting stability. I welcome the launch of pilot zone operations and encourage Lebanon and Israel to fulfil their obligations and advance the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1701.

Mister President,

The determination and resourcefulness I witnessed on my recent visit to Gaza must be matched by sustained and coordinated international engagement. There were positive signs of this commitment and mobilization at the recent gathering in Brussels. We must now carry this momentum forward.

Resolution 2803 and its transitional arrangements must be implemented in full.

Concurrently, urgent steps must be taken to reverse the rapid deterioration in the West Bank, support the PA, and lay the groundwork for its return to governing Gaza. A coordinated approach is needed to ensure that these efforts are mutually reinforcing.

Ultimately, Gaza's reconstruction cannot be sustained in the absence of a political process. Similarly, a political process cannot succeed while Gaza remains devastated, violence escalates in the West Bank, Palestinian institutions remain divided, and security conditions continue to deteriorate.

I urge this Council to use its voice and authority to ensure that its resolutions are translated into meaningful action on the ground.

The UN will continue to engage with all stakeholders and harness its operational capacity on the ground to advance this agenda and support a better future for Palestinians and Israelis.

Thank you so much for your attention.

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