Statement by Acting Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Ramiz Alakbarov, Marking Three Years Since 7 October 2023

Jerusalem, 06 October 2026

Three years have passed, yet in Israel and in many places around the world, the pain and trauma of that dark morning of October 7, 2023, remain deeply present.

On that day, Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups launched a horrific terror attack on Israel. Families were murdered in their homes, including children and the elderly. Young people were hunted down at a music festival. Women and men were subjected to brutal acts of sexual violence. Communities were invaded and destroyed, and people of all ages were taken hostage and held in inhumane conditions, some for over two years.

While I visited Nir Oz, walked among the burned homes of a devastated community and spoke with survivors, I was reminded that the passage of time cannot erase the pain of those hours and days. The names and faces of the victims remain etched in the memory of a nation, while survivors carry the physical and emotional scars of what they endured.

We remember all the hostages who did not return alive from Gaza, including those murdered by their captors, and extend our deepest condolences to their families who continue to mourn their loved ones.

The accounts of captivity are deeply distressing. There is no justification for the deliberate killing, injury or abduction of civilians, or for the taking of hostages.

The war that began in its aftermath has inflicted immense suffering on Palestinians in Gaza, with civilians bearing a devastating toll. The scale of death and destruction, the displacement of entire communities, and the collapse of essential civilian infrastructure underscore the urgent need for a different path. The lives and suffering of civilians in Gaza cannot be ignored. Acknowledging that suffering does not diminish the atrocities of 7 October, nor does it equate the two. It reflects the same fundamental principle: civilian life must be protected, and international law must be respected.

Three years of devastating violence have demonstrated the terrible human cost of seeking a military solution to a political conflict.

As we remember the victims of 7 October and all those who have suffered throughout this devastating conflict, we must remain determined to prevent such tragedies from being repeated.

No matter how dark the present is, the future does not have to be defined by conflict and destruction. Peace must be the only way forward but working towards an irreversible political horizon, that will benefit both Israelis and Palestinians, requires political courage, empathy and perseverance.

The international community needs to accompany both sides to find a solution that addresses the legitimate needs and aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians and enables both peoples to live in security and dignity. This cannot be achieved through continued violence.

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