

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**  
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**REMARKS TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON  
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

**New York, 14 April 2024**

**[as delivered]**

Madam President,  
Excellencies,

The Middle East is on the brink.

The people of the region are confronting a real danger of a devastating full-scale conflict.

Now is the time to defuse and de-escalate.

Now is the time for maximum restraint.

This emergency session has been convened upon an urgent request by the Permanent Representative of Israel, who noted in his letter dated 13 April to the President of the Security Council, that Iran had launched – and I quote -- “a direct attack from within its territory of more than 200 UAVs, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles towards Israel in clear violation of the UN Charter and international law.” [unquote]

Yesterday, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran also addressed a letter to the President of the Security Council, stating that – and I quote -- “in the late hours of 13 April 2024, the Islamic Republic of Iran carried out a series of military strikes on Israeli military objectives.” [unquote]

He stated that the action was taken – and I quote -- “in the exercise of Iran’s inherent right to self-defence as outlined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, and in response to the Israeli recurring military aggressions, particularly its armed attack on 1 April 2024 against Iranian diplomatic premises” – unquote.

According to the latest reports, Iran launched hundreds of drones and missiles from its territory toward Israel, with most intercepted.

Several missiles reportedly struck within Israeli territory, one of which damaged an Israeli military facility in the south of the country.

And overall, a few civilians were injured.

Madam President,

When the nature of the attack became clear, I stated the following last night and I quote:

“I strongly condemn the serious escalation represented by the large-scale attack launched on Israel by the Islamic Republic of Iran this evening.

And I call for an immediate cessation of these hostilities.” [unquote]

I remind all Member States that the Charter of the United Nations prohibits the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.

Furthermore, the principle of inviolability of diplomatic and consular premises and personnel must be respected in all cases in accordance with international law, as I stated when condemning the 1 April attack on the Iranian consulate in Damascus.

Madam President,

It’s time to step back from the brink.

It is vital to avoid any action that could lead to major military confrontations on multiple fronts in the Middle East.

Civilians are already bearing the brunt and paying the highest price.

And we have a shared responsibility to actively engage all parties concerned to prevent further escalation.

As the Friendly Relations Declaration of 1970 states, acts of reprisal involving the use of force are barred under international law.

We have a shared responsibility to secure an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, and the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid.

We have a shared responsibility to stop violence in the occupied West Bank, de-escalate the situation along the Blue Line, and re-establish safe navigation in the Red Sea.

We have a shared responsibility to work for peace.

Regional – and indeed global -- peace and security are being undermined by the hour.

Neither the region nor the world can afford more war.

Thank you.

[END]