



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



**Security Council Briefing on the situation in the Middle East
23 January 2025**

Greece's Remarks delivered
by HE Ambassador Evangelos Sekeris,
Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations, New York

Thank you Mr. President,

I would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Tom Fletcher, and Ms. Beesan Nateel, for their detailed briefings.

The briefers today, and those who have preceded them in this Chamber over the past year, have tried to describe a humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, too difficult to grasp.

They say that the first casualty of war is the truth.

Mr. President,

Early on in this war, the Security Council recognized its disproportionate impact on children, when it adopted Resolution **2712** (2023), demanding "the parties to comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, notably with regard to the protection of civilians, especially children.

Evidently, this war has taken a shocking toll on children in Gaza, reportedly leaving at least 14,500 dead, and thousands more injured, separated from their families and nearly one million internally displaced.

They all have names; they all deserved a better future.

Mr. President,

A few days ago, in this chamber, we welcomed a long-overdue ceasefire deal, struck between the parties.

We welcomed this deal, in hopes that it will last and lead to a situation where recovery from 15 enormously difficult months for the people of Gaza, can be attainable.

We understand the shock on Israeli society and the international community by the horrendous attacks of October 7 by Hamas which also led to the killing and abduction of many children. At the same time, international law and international humanitarian law must remain the compass for our behavior.

In this vein, we join our colleagues in asking the parties to adhere to the ceasefire deal and respect the provisions of International Humanitarian Law.

We cannot but stress the importance of ensuring the protection of all civilians, at all times, including humanitarian workers, in line with the international humanitarian law.

We also encourage parties listed in the Secretary General's Report to engage with the United Nations on preventing violations committed against children.

The suffering of civilians must come to an end.

All crossings should be open for aid delivery, that should come quickly and at scale, to meet the urgent needs of a starving population.

UNRWA's operations remain vital for the thousands of children in Gaza, stripped of their basic rights;

to safety; to healthcare; to education.

There can be no "day-after" scenario for the Gaza Strip without child-centered services.

The valuable work of UNRWA and other international organizations, like UNICEF, cannot be overstated; and we proudly continue to support them.

Mr. President,

Protection of children is central to our conscience as human beings. Greece has decided to actively take steps to alleviate the suffering of children in Gaza. This week the first injured child from Gaza arrived in Greece, through Romania, for treatment and my country will further offer treatment to several more injured children in Greek hospitals.

The only long-term solution for the region is to revitalize the political process to pave the way for a political horizon for a two state solution, according to relevant Security Council Resolutions, while recognizing the right of Israel to exist in peace and security.

In the meantime, we call on all parties to refrain from actions that put children in danger.

Attacks on children, coupled with hindered access to humanitarian aid constitute grave violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Mr. President,

In a world stuck in a cycle of violence, children are the world's hope and should be given hope.

They should be allowed to re-invent a better world for all of us.

I thank you.