



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



**Security Council High Level Open Debate on the situation in the Middle East, including
the Palestinian Question**

20 January 2025

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

Thank you Mr. President.

Excellencies,

Esteemed colleagues,

Calls-for peace in the Middle East have been far too many in this Chamber.

And they have been repeated far too many times in its history.

Mr. President,

My country, Greece warmly welcomes the long-awaited ceasefire and hostage release agreement.

As fragile as it may seem, it might be a turning point for establishing enduring stability in the region.

It is now time to fully deliver on this deal so that all Israeli hostages finally rejoin their loved ones and that the Palestinian people finally stop counting their dead.

Mr. President,

Words fail to convey the accumulated pain and suffering endured by the people in this turbulent region—one very close to home.

Words are insufficient to convey the horror experienced by Israeli families having lost loved ones to the terror of Hamas; or that of innocent civilians, including thousands of children, who lost their lives in Gaza.

It is finally time to silence the guns, and for peace to prevail.

Yesterday we were overjoyed that three female hostages – Romi Gonen, Doron Steinbrecher and Emily Damari – finally joined their families in Israel after being held captive by Hamas terrorists since October 7, 2023.

It is now key to make sure that negotiations on the next phases succeed.

It is time to accelerate discussions to advance post-conflict planning for the governance and security of Gaza for the longer term to secure a safe and prosperous future for the Palestinians and all the people in the region.

Inspired by the heritage of a region, which is the birthplace of so many of the world's religions, we are believers in the prospect of a Two-State solution.

Of Israelis and Palestinians living side by side in peace and security.

Believers in the positive culmination of the Peace Process, which remains on our collective horizon,

as a beacon at the far end of a dark and long tunnel.

Hanging by a thread, unless our collective voice strives to keep it alive.

For alive it must stay.

Mr. President,

These past few weeks have allowed for hope on the region's horizon.

The guns seem to be widely silenced along the Lebanese-Israeli border;

And Lebanon has overcome its political impasse, having elected a new President and soon, it appears, by a government with a mandate to bring about positive change.

The culmination of these positive developments seem to have led us back to the core of the region's turmoil.

To Gaza and the Palestinian Question.

Where the long and commendable mediation efforts of the United States, Egypt and Qatar were finally successful. We thank them for their tireless efforts.

Agreeing with the outgoing US President who said, citing the Bible, "blessed be the peacemakers".

For while it may require strength to preserve a conflict, it takes tremendous courage to transcend it.

Let the destructive cycle of violence finally end.

Let tensions cool.

And let us turn to the day hereafter, to reconstruction; reconciliation;
and the creative activities of peacetime.

Mr. President,

We should be hopeful; but not naïve.

We should remain cautious of the difficulties on the ground. The fragile agreement must hold,
and we call on all sides to do their part to uphold it.

The humanitarian situation on the ground is most concerning.

In this context, UNRWA's role is irreplaceable.

As highlighted by the Secretary General's recent letter, there is no alternative to its accumulated
experience of providing a wide spectrum of valuable, essential services to Palestinian people,
for over 75 years.

Obstructing the Agency's capacity to operate within its mandate is not helpful at this stage;
it could even be detrimental.

Its role will be indispensable for implementing the humanitarian aspects of the agreement.

It is thus crucial that the recommendations of the Colonna Report be diligently and fully
implemented.

It could even be a catalyst in terms of much-needed cooperation between the Agency and Israel.

Greek support to UNRWA has not ceased;

Likewise, Greece is committed to supporting humanitarian initiatives such as the Cypriot
Amaltheia Plan, which has recently allowed for the provision of more than a thousand tons of
humanitarian aid to Gaza through the port of Ashdod.

To alleviate some of the pain.

To save some of the lives.

For, as stated in Talmud, "whoever saves one life, saves the world entire."

Mr. President,

Consistent with its long-established relations with the Palestinians and the Arab world, and a strategic ally of Israel, Greece will do its utmost as a bridge-builder during its tenure at this Council.

What we have witnessed since Hamas unleashed its terror on October 7 has been a tragedy.

May this be the end of this tragedy.

May we see the release of all hostages and the ceasefire preserved. May it evolve into long-time peace.

And may we see the Peace Process revived, towards a viable Two-State solution.

I thank you.