



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



**Security Council Briefing
on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question
20 March 2025**

Statement delivered by
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Thank you, Madam President,

I also wish to thank ASG Khaled Khiari for his briefing, as well as Mr. Eli Sharabi for his presence here today.

Madam President,

531 days have passed since Hamas launched a brutal terrorist attack on Israel. Greece immediately condemned this attack, as well as the cruel treatment of all hostages kept in captivity in terrible and inhumane conditions. Today, 59 hostages still remain in Hamas' captivity, 24 of whom are believed to be alive.

The tragic story of Eli Sharabi is a sheer reminder that this war must end now. We extend our deepest and most heartfelt condolences to him for the tragic loss of beloved family members, as well as to the families of victims and hostages.

We reiterate our call for all hostages to be released immediately and unconditionally.

Traumatic stories like the one of Noa Argamani's, whose partner is still in captivity, are mere reflections of the scale of pain still endured by survivors in captivity and their loved ones.

Likewise, the heartbreaking fate of the Bibas family highlights the urgent need to bring their agony and suffering to an end. Our thoughts remain with them.

Madam President,

The long-awaited ceasefire and hostage release agreement in Gaza was a great example of what could be achieved through political will, an opportunity to replace despair with hope for a better future.

Hope on the horizon became visible when Israeli families were given the chance to finally reunite their loved ones and Palestinian people were finally able to stop counting their dead.

In this respect, we are very concerned with the resumption of hostilities in Gaza and the high toll on civilians. It is necessary to resume negotiations for the ceasefire's renewal immediately, so as to ensure the release of remaining hostages and to protect the lives of the civilian population in Gaza.

Madam President,

The world cannot and should not forget neither the lives taken as a result of the horrendous terrorist attack on October 7 nor the lives of the remaining hostages.

At the same time, we cannot and should not forget that the war in Gaza has left behind thousands of Palestinians dead, injured, separated from their families and internally displaced.

The humanitarian crisis on the ground cannot be ignored. Millions are in urgent need of primary health services, education and shelter.

Safe, unconditional, massive and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid at scale to the people in Gaza must be ensured.

We share the grief for the UNOPS staff member, who died during the strike at the UN guesthouses in Gaza and offer our condolences to his family and the UN.

Border crossing points must remain open; UNRWA's role should not be undermined; civilians and humanitarian workers must be protected in line with international humanitarian law.

Madam President,

The political process must be revitalized with the aim of achieving a two-state solution, according to the relevant Security Council Resolutions, while recognizing the right of Israel to exist in peace and security. In this vein, we look forward to the international conference to be held in June, here in New York, under the stewardship of France and Saudi Arabia as co-chairs.

We welcome regional efforts to cohere around a single plan for the next phase in Gaza and we stand ready to support and develop these ideas further.

The Arab plan for the reconstruction of Gaza is a constructive proposal on the table and could help accelerate discussions on reconstruction, post-conflict planning and on the "day after". It is a good starting point which requires further engagement with Egypt and other key Arab players.

Madam President,

This circle of violence must end now and the hostages must be released without delay. It is evident by now that this conflict has no military solution.

As we have stressed before, there can be no "day-after" scenario for the Gaza Strip with Hamas in power or in any position to threaten Israel.

We cannot change the past. But, we can start now and lay the foundations for the future.

The suffering of both sides must come to an end. Neither the hostages and their families nor the Palestinians can afford a pullback from the ceasefire agreement. The deal must hold. Therefore, it is crucial for the parties to return to the table of negotiations and proceed to the next phases in good faith

Time is running out. The time to act is now.

I thank you.