



**PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**



**Security Council Briefing
on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question
3 April 2025**

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

Thank you, Mr. President,

I also wish to thank the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Volker Türk, and the President of the Palestine Red Cross Society, Dr. Younes Al-Khatib, for their detailed briefings.

Colleagues,

It has only been a week since we mourned the loss of UNOPS and UNRWA personnel, who have been providing lifeline support in a region where thousands of lives are put at risk.

Yet, the safety and security of humanitarian workers continues to be undermined on a daily basis. We were informed of the tragic loss of 15 Palestinian Red Crescent Society and UN staff members who died during an Israeli ground operation in Rafah on 23 March. In this regard, I wish to reiterate our condolences. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families.

Mr. President,

The protection of humanitarian and aid workers must remain a non-negotiable, absolute principle at all times, as proclaimed by international law, and more specifically the Geneva Conventions.

The same principles apply to civilians. Since the resumption of hostilities in the Gaza Strip, hundreds of Palestinians have been killed; thousands have been forced to flee due to continued airstrikes and new evacuation orders; all of them are in urgent need of food, medical treatment and shelter. Despite the reported dramatic surge in miscarriages by 300% during the war, children are still being born daily in Gaza, under a total siege and deprivation of supplies for over a month.

We regret the conditions that led the Secretary-General to take the difficult decision to reduce the Organizations' footprint in Gaza, despite increased humanitarian needs and the growing concern over the protection of civilians. NGO workers report that their sense of fear and risk has significantly increased since the end of the ceasefire in Gaza.

Mr. President,

Greece has repeatedly condemned the October 7 terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas, as well as the ongoing detention and cruel and inhumane treatment of its hostages. We reiterate our demand for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, unequivocally condemning Hamas's terror. It is the people of Gaza that suffer in the face of Hamas' intransigence and Israel's relaunch of operations.

In this context, we call on Israel to allow and facilitate the safe, unconditional, massive and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid at scale, to restore access to electricity and water, as well as to ensure the protection of civilians and other protected persons, including humanitarian workers, in line with international humanitarian law.

Colleagues,

The situation in the West Bank requires our urgent attention as well. While the focus of the international community is currently on Gaza, the security and humanitarian conditions in the West Bank are deteriorating.

We are gravely concerned about reports of increasing violence, displacement of more than 40.000 people from refugee camps in the north, attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, as well as demolition and seizure of Palestinian-owned properties. Such actions constitute severe violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law and they undermine the prospect of a peaceful resolution on the Palestinian issue based on the two-state solution.

Greece also deplores the increase of settlement activity in the West Bank. Such attempts are contrary to international law and the relevant Security Council Resolutions and have no legal validity.

At the same time, UNRWA's role remains pivotal and indispensable. We are particularly troubled by the continued attacks on UN premises, including yesterday's attack on an UNRWA Health Centre in Jabalia, which led to several casualties, including 9 children. International law clearly proclaims the inviolability of UN premises – in the absence of which, UN colleagues face severe risks as they work to save civilian lives and promote peace globally.

Mr. President,

The resumption of hostilities and the death toll is cause of grave concern. We call on all parties to seize the opportunity to return to the negotiations table with the aim of achieving a permanent ceasefire and the immediate release of all hostages. We commend the mediators, Egypt and Qatar and the United States, for not giving up on their efforts.

Our discussion is always framed by the prospect of a two State solution; aligned with the acquis of the Security Council Resolutions and recognizing the right of Israel to live in peace and security. The upcoming June Conference, under the co-presidency of France and Saudi Arabia could be a critical milestone in this regard. In addition, the Arab recovery and reconstruction plan for Gaza, as presented by Egypt, is a constructive proposal – as is the upcoming International Reconstruction Conference to be held in Cairo next month.

I thank you.