



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



**Security Council Open Debate
on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question
29 April 2025**

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

Thank you, Your Excellency.

Peace cannot be achieved through violence; it can only be attained through understanding and negotiations.

Yet, a political understanding on the Palestinian question remains elusive, as we are only a month away from the upcoming June Conference and the prospects of a ceasefire deal are still unclear.

The June Conference presents a unique opportunity to revitalize the political process and pave the way towards the implementation of the two-state solution, according to the relevant Security Council Resolutions, while recognizing the right of Israel to exist side by side with the Palestinians in peace.

We support the efforts by France and Saudi Arabia, and sincerely thank them for their work and their leadership in promoting a sustainable day-after for the region. Having said that, we cannot but stress the importance for the fruition of the negotiations, with the aim of achieving a permanent and sustainable ceasefire, while securing the release of all hostages. We commend the mediators, Egypt and Qatar and the United States, for their tireless efforts.

Undoubtedly, a peaceful future in the Middle East cannot be established through violence and the forced displacement of people. It is also clear that Hamas cannot have any future in Gaza.

The way towards peace should be based on international law, while ensuring the leading role of a reformed Palestinian Authority, being the only credible and moderate alternative with the assistance of the international community. The EU has exercised critical leadership in this regard by announcing a 1.8 bil. support package for the Palestinians. We also commend the PA's readiness to continue its ambitious reform agenda.

Likewise, the Arab plan for Gaza, as presented by Egypt, is a constructive proposal. Greece supports this initiative as a good starting point towards planning reconstruction and we reiterate that Hamas should have no role in the day after as it continues to be a serious obstacle for sustainable peace.

On the humanitarian front, the ongoing hostilities in the Gaza Strip have led to a significant increase of the death toll, leaving behind hundreds of Palestinians dead, thousands wounded and internally displaced, all in acute need of food, water, medical supplies and shelter.

At the same time, the hostages and their families continue to live in a daily agony and uncertainty. Greece has repeatedly condemned the October 7 terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas and the cruel treatment of the hostages who remain in Hamas's captivity. All hostages must be treated humanely and immediately and unconditionally released.

It is evident that the humanitarian blockade further deprives people of the means for survival.

The unhindered and continuous flow of aid at scale into all parts of Gaza combined with the restoration of the water and electricity systems constitutes a priority.

At the same time, humanitarian workers, medical staff and patients must be protected at all times in accordance with international humanitarian law.

Mr. President,

The humanitarian and security landscape in the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territories remains alarming. We are deeply concerned by the closure orders issued by the Israeli authorities against UNRWA schools in East Jerusalem, a decision which threatens the fundamental right of education of hundreds of pupils. UNRWA's role remains pivotal and indispensable.

Turning to the West Bank, Greece expresses concern over the increase of settlement activity, the displacement of people from refugee camps, attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, demolition and seizure of Palestinian-owned properties, as well as the restricted access of aid groups to refugee camps.

The special Status Quo of Jerusalem and its Old City is of particular importance. It must be protected and respected by all and at all times; its sacred spaces should remain inviolable; all of its communities should enjoy viability; last but not least, Jordan's special role as Custodian of Muslim and Christian Holy Sites in Jerusalem must be preserved, as it actively and beneficially contributes to preserving multiculturalism and religious tolerance in the region.

Mr. President,

In Lebanon, the formation of a new government presents a unique opportunity to restore stability. The new government has demonstrated its readiness to promote essential reforms and finally turn the page for Lebanese to have a new opportunity for peace and prosperity for the benefit of the whole region. This was clearly demonstrated in the recent Quadrilateral meeting of the leaders of Greece, France, Cyprus and Lebanon this past month.

Forging strong State institutions, including the Lebanese Armed Forces, which play a crucial role in the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, is very important. We stand ready to assist the LAF, as the Greek Minister of Defense underscored during his visit to Beirut earlier this month.

We strongly reaffirm our support for the relevant SC Resolutions and the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon, as mentioned in the SC Presidential

Statement of January 15. UNIFIL is key for the restoration of peace and security, and thus Greece will be actively engaged in the discussions for the renewal of its mandate this summer.

Mr. President,

It has only been a few days since our last meeting in this Chamber on the situation in Syria, in the presence of Syrian interim Foreign Minister Al- Shaibani.

As Special Envoy Pedersen noted, the political transition in Syria is now at a truly critical juncture. This transition needs to be fully inclusive and Syrian-led and -owned, according to the principles of UNSC Resolution 2554, as justice, accountability and respect for International Law, including the Law of the Sea, remain critical. A stable and prosperous Syria is key for the future of the Middle East.

In concluding, Mr. President,

Hope should prevail over violence. The cycle of violence that started on October 7 must finally come to an end, so as to open the path for a vision of regional integration and prosperity which would bring concrete benefits to all peoples in the region.

I thank you.