



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



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Greece's Statement delivered
by H.E. Ms. Aglaia Balta
Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations

I wish to thank today's briefers, USGs Fletcher, DiCarlo and LaCroix, for their thorough remarks. I also wish to thank Ms Lynn Harfoush for her compelling message. I welcome the presence of the Representatives of Lebanon, Israel, the Syrian Arab Republic and Cyprus in today's meeting.

Greece, alongside France, Denmark, Latvia and the UK called for today's briefing due to the dangerous escalation in Lebanon. An escalation which bears serious consequences for the civilian population and for UNIFIL peacekeepers.

Mr. President,

Lebanon is the victim of a war it did not choose. We strongly condemn the attacks of Hezbollah, acting in support of Iran, against Israel, which triggered this round of escalation. Hezbollah constitutes a threat to regional stability. Hezbollah had no right to unilaterally drag the Lebanese people into misery and despair. The Lebanese State is the sole legitimate Authority, which can conduct military operations and define Lebanon's foreign relations. Hezbollah must disarm immediately and stop all actions against Israel. In the midst of these developments, we welcome and commend the decision of the Lebanese Council of Ministers to ban Hezbollah's military activities.

The resolve of the Lebanese leadership to extend its exclusive control over arms is clear. It should be given a chance to bring security and prosperity to Lebanon. We should all be standing by their side. Its steadfast commitment did not falter in the face of developments; instead, it seems to have been strengthened. We reaffirm our support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon. Lebanese sovereignty must be fully respected and civilians must be protected in accordance with international law.

Mr. President,

As the spiral of escalation accelerates, we call for maximum restraint and the protection of civilians and infrastructure. Restraint can be a virtue in times of crisis, and indicative of

strength and resolve, not weakness. As the Greek Prime Minister said in his telephone conversations with the leaders of Israel and Lebanon, Greece recognizes the right of Israel to defend itself according to international law.

However, further escalation must be avoided, similar to the undertaking of prolonged, large-scale military operations in the Lebanese South, which risks plunging the region in more instability and conflict. Full respect of Security Council Resolution 1701 and the ceasefire agreement of 2024 is a pre-requisite for stability.

As our briefers described, Lebanon is faced with a profound humanitarian challenge. More than 700.000 civilians have been displaced, while dozens are dead and injured. And children are caught in the midst of this chaos. The risk of instability spilling over to the broader region, in the form of extensive refugee flows, is all too real. According to the International Organization for Migration, some 50.000 Syrians left Lebanon for Syria this past week alone.

Greece is participating in international humanitarian efforts in support of Lebanon and its reconstruction. We stand ready to participate in the Conference in Support of the Lebanese Armed Forces in Paris, spearheaded by France and Saudi Arabia, when it takes place. We also continue to assist Lebanon in its efforts to forge strong State institutions, including the LAF. It is a pledge made by the Greek Prime Minister to President Aoun, which has already produced concrete results. These include the recently procured defense material to the Lebanese armed forces to enhance their capabilities. We are committed to continuing our support to the Lebanese Armed Forces

At the same time, also in line with the latest communication between our Prime Minister and President Aoun, we remain in constant contact with the competent Lebanese authorities. We are finalizing our contribution to address the grave humanitarian crisis on the ground.

Mr. President,

Greece condemns the incident resulting in the injury of three Ghanaian peacekeepers of UNIFIL amidst heavy firing. The safety and security of UN personnel and property must be respected at all times. We call on all parties to engage constructively through dialogue and diplomacy, potentially turning a crisis into an opportunity for long-term peaceful co-existence in the region. In this context, we welcome the Lebanese leadership's openness to engage diplomatically with Israel towards a peaceful settlement.

In conclusion, as the Greek Prime Minister stated alongside the French and Cypriot Presidents in the Republic of Cyprus yesterday, Lebanon, which we fully support, merits a better future; certainly, one beyond the plans and purposes of other, outside forces.

I thank you.