



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



**Security Council Briefing on
the Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question
Thursday 21 May 2026**

Greece's Statement delivered
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Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations

Thank you, Mr. President,

and let me thank the Deputy Special Coordinator, Mr. Alakbarov, the High Representative for Gaza to the BoP, Mr. Mladenov, for their comprehensive briefings, as well as Mr. Hijjo for his testimony.

Mr. President,

The Comprehensive Peace Plan for Gaza, as endorsed by UNSC Resolution 2803 just a few months ago, offered genuine hope for the gradual recovery of the Strip. We welcome the progress outlined in the BoP Report, as the Council needs to remain apprised of developments on the ground. The ceasefire holds despite considerable challenges and violations; humanitarian assistance has been scaled up; and all hostages have been released. These are notable achievements, unthinkable seven or eight months ago.

Nevertheless, peace will remain incomplete and may be endangered without further steps, including on the humanitarian front. Hamas and all other armed groups must urgently and fully disarm, with the aim of addressing the legitimate security concerns of Israel and paving the way toward reconstruction. Moreover, as Hamas's decommissioning is expected to be a lengthy process, early recovery initiatives and projects should be undertaken in parallel, in order not to lose momentum and to avoid reaching a stalemate.

We anticipate the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza's timely settlement, and the eventual deployment of the newly vetted Palestinian Police Forces in Gaza. Hamas and all armed factions can have no role in the governance of Gaza, under the principle of one authority, one law and one weapon. Governance arrangements must be legitimate and durable, while transitional structures should harmoniously complement existing institutions, avoiding parallel structures or undermining the Palestinian Authority.

The clear improvement of conditions notwithstanding, serious humanitarian challenges persist. Infectious diseases, malnutrition, limited medical evacuations and constraints on

the entry of critical equipment constitute only part of the humanitarian challenges in the Gaza Strip. A steady pace of humanitarian and commercial flows must thus be fully maintained and further increased. Humanitarian actors, including UNRWA, and aid initiatives, such as the Cyprus Maritime Humanitarian Corridor, can play a significant role in this regard. We urge all parties to seize this momentum and work together towards a collective vision for regional peace and prosperity — a vision that must include, however, also the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which brings me to my next point.

A mere two weeks ago, this Council heard from distinguished briefers on the alarming situation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem at an Arria-formula meeting. The increasing and unprecedented settler violence targeting the Palestinian population, including Christian communities, is condemnable and must cease immediately. The EU recently sanctioned extremists responsible for human rights abuses in the West Bank.

Similarly deplorable are the continuous restrictions on movement, the illegal settlement expansion, and the forced displacement of Palestinians. Israel, in line with its recent positive statements, must ensure accountability for incidents of settler violence. We stress the importance of consistent investigations, follow-up, and implementation of relevant decisions to this effect.

Furthermore, we reiterate once again our call for the release of withheld Palestinian tax revenues – a key requirement for the implementation of important reforms and in order to avoid the fiscal collapse of the Palestinian Authority.

The health sector must also be supported through expedited international assistance. Greece is ready -as we have stated in previous statements- to contribute financially through the EU PEGASE mechanism to support the East Jerusalem hospital network, while also calling for an end to all restrictions imposed on its operations.

Finally, we call for the preservation of and respect for the Status Quo of the Holy Sites in Jerusalem which is of paramount importance.

Mr. President,

A peaceful path ahead is possible only through the reinvigoration of a credible political process and a clear political horizon for the Palestinians, leading to a two-state solution, in line with all relevant UNSC Resolutions and the NY Declaration — a solution consistently supported by the international community, allowing both Israelis and Palestinians to live side by side, in peace, mutual recognition and security.

In closing, Mr. President, let me add a few remarks on Lebanon, a key partner for peace and stability in the Middle East. We warmly welcome the extension of the ceasefire and call for the full implementation of UNSC Res 1701. We support the continuation of the historical, political talks between Lebanon and Israel, under the US auspices, and we

hope that the eventual progress and conditions on the ground will pave the way toward a comprehensive Peace Agreement.

I thank you.