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Greece's Statement delivered by
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Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations, New York

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Thank you, Mr. Alakbarov for your briefing; as always you set the premise for our discussion.

For generations, the Middle East has been marked by unresolved conflicts, recurring violence and missed opportunities for peace. October 7 and its devastating aftermath have once again exposed the human cost of leaving these conflicts unresolved.

The question before us is whether we can finally break this cycle and turn a fragile pause in hostilities into a genuine path towards peace. Recent diplomatic efforts have shown that progress is possible. But de-escalation is not an end in itself. It must open the way to political solutions that address the legitimate security concerns of states and the aspirations of peoples across the region. International law and the UN Charter must remain our compass in this vein.

Let me begin with Gaza.

The two-State solution remains the only viable path to a just and lasting peace, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace, security and dignity. The ceasefire and progress under Security Council Resolution 2803 offer a critical opportunity to move beyond war. We must maintain this momentum towards the full implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. We therefore cannot afford to let it slip away.

Last week, here at the United Nations, we remembered the victims and honored the survivor of October 7. Their testimonies reminded us of the profound human toll of that day, the horror of the attacks and the taking of hostages must never be forgotten or justified.

At the same time, the immense suffering of Palestinian civilians cannot define Gaza's future. The ceasefire must be consolidated. Humanitarian assistance delivered at the scale and at the pace required, and civilian protection upheld. UNHRA continues to play an indispensable role in delivering essential services to Palestinian refugees, and its capacity to operate must be safeguarded.

The next phase must advance recovery, reconstruction and legitimate governance. Disarming Hamas and other armed groups is essential for lasting security. Transitional arrangements must strengthen, not sideline, Palestinian institutions, with the Palestinian Authority remaining central to Gaza's political future.

Restoring essential services, rebuilding homes and critical infrastructure is vital to enabling Palestinians to live in dignity and ensuring regional stability. Greece stands ready to contribute to these efforts, including through the Gaza Team Initiative, in cooperation with the UN, the EU and regional partners.

But Gaza cannot be separated from the West Bank.

Settlement expansion, forced displacement, demolitions and escalating settler violence are eroding the foundations of a viable Palestinian State. The recent violence during the olive harvest is a stark reminder that developments on the ground continue to undermine peace. Those responsible for violence against civilians must be held accountable.

Preserving the legal and historical status quo at Jerusalem's Holy Sites is equally essential for religious freedom, interfaith coexistence and regional stability.

We have consistently called for the release of withheld Palestinian clearance revenues and welcomed the Palestinian Authority's reform efforts. While acknowledging the challenges facing the Palestinian Authority, we reiterate the importance of holding credible and inclusive elections as soon as possible.

Colleagues,

Gaza and the West Bank cannot be addressed in isolation. This is the fundamental logic of the New York Declaration, which Greece fully supports. Lasting security for Israel must go hand in hand with a viable political horizon for the Palestinian people.

Let me turn, finally, to Lebanon.

Greece welcomes efforts to consolidate the ceasefire and advance direct Israeli-Lebanese talks. The Washington Framework Agreement offers an important opportunity to achieve a durable cessation of hostilities and lay the foundations for lasting peace. We hope that direct talks between Israel and Lebanon will resume as soon as possible, building on the momentum created by recent diplomatic efforts.

The full implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 remains the cornerstone of stability. This requires ensuring the disarmament of Hezbollah and other non-State armed groups, extending the Lebanese State's authority throughout its territory, establishing its monopoly over arms and securing the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanese territory.

As UNIFIL's mandate approaches its end, we must avoid a security vacuum. Any future international presence should preserve essential monitoring, liaison and confidence-building functions and support the Lebanese Armed Forces in extending State authority in the South. The EU has taken the decision on October 12th to establish a new CSDP Support Mission in Lebanon, with an initial mandate of 3 years, aimed at strengthening the capacities of the Lebanese Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces, as well as supporting maritime security governance, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1701. Greece intends to actively participate in the mission, building on its longstanding contribution to UNIFIL.

Concluding, colleagues,

The Middle East does not lack diplomatic initiatives. What it has lacked, for too long, is the ability to translate them into lasting political outcomes.

Greece will continue to contribute constructively to this effort. Our message is clear: a ceasefire must be more than a pause in conflict; it must be the beginning of a process that delivers a just and lasting peace.

I thank you.