

21 July 2006



## Security Council SC/8782

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

### **UNITED NATIONS MIDDLE EAST ENVOY DESCRIBES 'SERIOUS OBSTACLES' TO ACHIEVING COMPREHENSIVE CEASEFIRE IN LEBANON, IN BRIEFING TO SECURITY COUNCIL**

#### **Relief Coordinator Says Aid Appeal Will be Launched Monday; Nearly 50 Speakers Address Council in Ensuing Day-Long Debate**

It had become clear that there were serious obstacles to the achievement of a comprehensive ceasefire in Lebanon and northern Israel in the immediate future, Vijay Nambiar, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General, told the Security Council today.

Briefing on a senior-level mission to the region, comprised also of Terje Roed-Larsen and Alvaro de Soto, he said the mission saw two vital political goals for the international community. The first one was to secure, urgently, some form of cessation of hostilities. The second goal was to quickly develop elements of a political framework that would pave the way for a full and durable ceasefire. A political package to that end should include the end of the Hizbollah threat against Israel and the full respect by all Lebanese parties and all Lebanon's neighbours of the Government of Lebanon's sovereignty and control.

He said both Lebanon's Prime Minister Fouad Siniora and the Speaker of the Parliament, Nabih Berri, had expressed great pain and frustration over the scope of Israel's military actions, and were almost incredulous that Israel had carried out actions that would, in their view, inevitably help Hizbollah in the long run. Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and other interlocutors had stressed Hizbollah's responsibility for initiating the conflict. They had made clear that Israel had decided that military operations would continue until Hizbollah was seriously weakened. After that, Israel would welcome a political framework that ensured no return to the status quo ante and would facilitate implementation of Council resolution 1559.

In responding to the mission's ideas, Lebanon's Prime Minister had stressed that, any process to reassert the sovereignty of the Government of Lebanon over the entire country, must address what he termed the "core issues", such as the issue of Shebaa Farms. Israel's Prime Minister Olmert and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni had been adamant that the captured Israeli soldiers must be returned unconditionally. They would consider any proposal that would help guarantee that Israel would not be vulnerable to terrorist rocket attacks along its northern border, through the Government of Lebanon deploying in the south and the disarmament of Hizbollah and other militant groups.

Regarding his consultations with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in Gaza, he said the President had expressed particular concern that the current crisis in Lebanon involved an attempt by non-Palestinian extremists to hijack leadership on the Palestinian issue. He felt it was important to de-link the crises, and for the Palestinian issue to be addressed on its merits.

Briefing the Council on the humanitarian situation, Jan Egeland, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, also appealed for an immediate cessation of hostilities, as it was the only way humanitarian work could become effective. As a result of targeting of fuel facilities, Beirut had only days of fuel remaining. It was believed that there were sufficient food supplies, including wheat stocks, to cover national consumption for one to three months. The primary concern was the destruction to food supply chains. Hospitals were functioning, but were overwhelmed. With the number of people in shelters increasing, access to safe drinking water was also a concern.

He said he had called on all parties to live up to their obligations under humanitarian law and grant access to humanitarian workers. Yesterday, he had handed over to Israel's Permanent Representative a formal request to the Government of Israel, which called for safe passage routes for humanitarian corridors in and out of Lebanon. He had also requested the parties to identify focal points in their Governments and forces to discuss modalities. A country team was currently in Beirut working to produce a flash appeal that would address the most

pressing humanitarian concerns for a period of three months. He asked for immediate contributions to that appeal, which would be launched on Monday.

Opening today's debate, in which nearly 50 speakers participated, the Permanent Observer of Palestine said the Council's inaction last week regarding a "reasonable and balanced resolution" on the Palestinian question had further bolstered Israel's perception that it was immune from the law and that it would not be held accountable for its illegal actions. "As the international community stands idly by, with the Security Council nearly paralyzed, Israel, the occupying Power, continues to kill, wound and maim defenceless Palestinian civilians," he said.

He said it was the duty of the Council to act immediately. It must begin by condemning the most recent Israeli aggression and call for the immediate cessation of hostilities. The Council must also call for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli occupying forces to their original positions before the aggression against the Gaza Strip began. Moreover, the Council must call on Israel to immediately release all democratically elected Palestinian officials being detained since 28 June.

The representative of Lebanon said that, once again, Israel was betting on its excessive military force to settle problems with its neighbours. Hiding behind the right to self-defence revealed Israel's twisted understanding of international law. He reiterated his country's call for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire under the auspices of the United Nations, and the full responsibility of the Lebanese Government to preserve and provide safety to the country and its citizens, by extending its authority over all its territory, including in the area of the Shebaa Farms. He appealed to the international community, and to the Council, to protect the achievements of the Lebanese people, by supporting their Government in facing the aggression and continuing on the path of democracy.

Israel's representative said that, during the last week, the world had learned of the enormous arsenal of missiles that Hizbollah had been amassing in Lebanon, and how deeply Hizbollah had penetrated Lebanese society. The Council had learned how right it had been in repeatedly demanding the disarming of that terrorist monster. Terrorism had occupied, ravaged and pillaged Lebanon. Terror was the true occupying power of Lebanon. Lebanon's Government, for its own political reasons, had chosen conflict with Israel, instead of battling the cancer that occupied the body and soul of its country. That cancer must be excised, not partially removed and allowed to fester again.

Israel grieved for each civilian casualty, he said. The world had also heard how difficult it was to distinguish between Hizbollah and civilians. Before a cessation of hostilities could be contemplated, however, the cessation of terror must be insisted on. A temporary and artificial ceasefire would only result in an illusory lull, which would allow that disease to kill again. The international community must finally address the terrorism that occupied Lebanon. The international community must also address the sponsors of terrorism, Syria and Iran, the axis of terror. He welcomed the declaration of the Group of Eight (G-8) leaders, whose 16 July statement provided a basis for progress towards a sustainable peace, he said.

The representative of the United States said his Government was studying several proposals on how best to secure implementation of resolution 1559, including the insertion of an international stabilization force. However, the key goal should be to disarm and "defang" Hizbollah. An immediate and unconditional ceasefire would only allow Hizbollah time to regroup and plan its next wave of kidnappings and attacks against Israel. As for a stabilization force, the questions were how to empower it to deal with Hizbollah, and how it would relate to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Another question was how such a force could contribute to fully implementing resolution 1559, which called for disarmament of militias and extending control by the Government of Lebanon of all of its territory.

There was no moral equivalence between acts of terrorism and Israel's exercise of its legitimate right to self-defence, he said. The civilian deaths were a tragedy, and the United States had urged the Government of Israel to exercise the greatest possible care in its use of force. It was, however, a mistake to ascribe a moral equivalence to civilians who died as the direct result of malicious terrorist acts, the very purpose of which was to kill civilians, and the tragic and unfortunate consequence of civilian deaths, as a result of military action taken in self-defence.

France's representative, speaking in his national capacity and echoing many speakers' sentiments, condemned in the strongest possible terms the continued firing of rockets into Israel. He also condemned Israel's disproportionate response, which was holding the Lebanese people hostage, killing large numbers of civilians and causing substantial material damage in Lebanon. While Israeli military operations were weakening Hizbollah's military capabilities, they were also fuelling hate. By systematically destroying the country's infrastructure, Israel was greatly weakening the Lebanese State. The Secretary-General's proposals provided the basis for developing a coherent solution. The Council must face up to its responsibilities and begin, as soon as possible, finalizing a resolution that would offer the framework for a lasting settlement of the crisis.

The representatives of Qatar, Japan, Slovakia, China, Russian Federation, Greece, Peru, United Republic of Tanzania, United Kingdom, Denmark, Ghana, Argentina, Congo, Syria, Finland (on behalf of the European Union), Malaysia (on behalf of Non-Aligned Movement), Switzerland, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Egypt, Norway, Jordan, Indonesia, Australia, Turkey, Morocco, Iran, Djibouti, New Zealand, India, Chile, Venezuela, Cuba, Sudan, Canada, Guatemala, United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Pakistan, Viet Nam and Mexico also addressed the Council.

The Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States also made a statement, as did the Chairman of Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The meeting started at 11:24 a.m. and was suspended at 1:18 p.m. It resumed at 3:18 p.m. and was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

### Background

The Security Council met today to discuss the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. Yesterday, the Council was briefed on the situation by Secretary-General Kofi Annan (see Press Release [SC/8780](#)). The Council addressed the situation on 14 July (see Press Release [SC/8776](#)).

### Briefings

VIJAY NAMBIAR, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, first gave an overview of developments since 21 June. He said efforts of mediators to obtain the release of the Israeli soldier captured on 25 June had been unsuccessful. Israel's military operation to secure his return and to prevent rocket attacks from Gaza continued. During the reporting period, Palestinian militants had fired over 200 rockets into southern Israel. At least 147 Palestinians had been killed by Israeli forces in Gaza and the West Bank, at least 15 of whom were children. More than 450 Palestinians had been injured. Five Israelis had been killed, and at least 25 injured, by Palestinian militants. He then went on to describe the humanitarian situation. He said that, on 27 June, Fatah and Hamas had reached an agreement on a revised version of the so-called "Prisoners' Document", on which to base a national unity Government and reform of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). President Mahmoud Abbas had stated, however, that efforts to put in place such a Government were on hold due to the crisis.

As of yesterday, the conflict had claimed the lives of over 300 Lebanese and 34 Israelis, while injuring over 500 Lebanese and approximately 200 Israelis. The United Nations had dispatched experts to Lebanon to support addressing the humanitarian needs. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) had established joint coordination centres in two locations. However, the mission was severely restricted in its movements. The destruction of roads and bridges had made access difficult. It was urgent that the Israeli Government extended its full cooperation, by immediately ensuring humanitarian access to those in need.

Reporting on his mission, which had been dispatched by the Secretary-General to the Middle East late last week to explore ways of defusing the crisis in the region, he said that, upon arrival in Cairo on 14 July, the mission had met with the Foreign Ministers of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and the personal envoy of the President of the Palestinian Authority and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States. On 16 July, the mission had gone to Beirut via Cyprus, where it had consulted with the European Union High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana. In Beirut, the mission had met twice, on 16 and 17 July, with Prime Minister Fouad Siniora and the Speaker of Parliament, Nabih Berri.

He said both the Prime Minister and the Speaker had expressed great pain and frustration over the scope of Israel's military actions. Both were almost incredulous that Israel would carry out actions that would, in their view, inevitably help Hizbollah in the long-run, by radicalizing public opinion. Both pressed for an immediate ceasefire. The Prime Minister had said he was not in a position to negotiate a ceasefire himself, as he had had no involvement in the initiation of Hizbollah's attack, which his Government had disavowed. He had stressed that Israel's activities made it more difficult to implement the relevant Council resolutions.

On 17 July, the mission had met Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and other high-level officials in Israel. They had stressed Hizbollah's responsibility for initiating the conflict, and stated that Hizbollah was financed, armed and supported by Syria and Iran. They had made clear that Israel had decided that the military operations would continue until Hizbollah was seriously weakened. It was meant as a definitive response to an unacceptable strategic threat posed by Hizbollah, and a message to Iran and Syria that threats by proxies would no longer be tolerated. Israeli captives must be unconditionally released and Israel was not prepared, at that time, to negotiate with Hizbollah through third parties. Interlocutors had stressed that they were seeking to minimize civilian casualties and damage to infrastructure, and accused Hizbollah of resorting to tactics that made it inevitable that civilians would be in the firing line. Once Hizbollah had been weakened sufficiently, Israel would welcome a political framework that ensured no return to the status quo, and would facilitate implementation of Council resolution 1559.

He said it had become clear that there were serious obstacles to the achievement of a comprehensive ceasefire in the immediate future. However, the mission saw two vital political goals for the international community in the days ahead. The first goal was to secure, urgently, some form of cessation of hostilities, so that captives were protected and released, humanitarian access assured, civilian casualties were reduced and political space opened to negotiate a full ceasefire. The second goal was to quickly develop elements of a political framework that would pave the way for a full and durable ceasefire. A return to the situation before the Hizbollah attack on 12 July was untenable. A political package was needed that would give the Governments of Israel and Lebanon confidence that the horrors would not be repeated. That package should include the end of the Hizbollah threat against Israel and the full respect by all Lebanese parties and all Lebanon's neighbours of the Government of Lebanon's sovereignty and control.

In responding to the ideas, Prime Minister Siniora had made it clear that any steps to defuse the crisis would require an internal Lebanese consensus. He had stressed that any process to reassert the sovereignty of the Government of Lebanon over the entire country must address what he termed the "core issues", such as the issue of Shebaa Farms. Israel's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister were adamant that the prisoners must be returned unconditionally, and not made part of a negotiating process. They would consider any proposal that would help guarantee that Israel would not be vulnerable to terrorist rocket attack along its northern border, through the Government of Lebanon deploying in the south and the disarmament of Hizbollah and other militant groups.

Regarding his consultations with President Abbas in Gaza, he said that President Abbas was particularly concerned that the current crisis in Lebanon involved an attempt by non-Palestinian extremists to hijack leadership on the Palestinian issue. He felt it was important to delink the crisis, and for the Palestinian issue to be addressed on its merits.

In conclusion, he said the team had met, on its way back from the region, with the Spanish Foreign Minister, Miguel Angel Moratinos. It had also met this morning with the Secretary of State of the United States, Condoleezza Rice. The Secretary-General and the Secretariat were working on the political, peacekeeping and humanitarian fronts to respond to the deep regional crisis. He would welcome a united stance by the Security Council.

JAN EGELAND, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, said the war, terror and attacks on civilians had to stop -- in Lebanon, northern Israel and Gaza. Too many children, women and other civilians had already lost their lives. The United Nations humanitarian agencies repeated the Secretary-General's appeal for an immediate cessation of hostilities, as it was the only way humanitarian work could become effective. With the conflict in Lebanon in its second week, the humanitarian crisis continued to worsen. Southern Lebanon, Beirut and the Bekaa Valley were the most affected areas. A third of casualties were reportedly children. In northern Israel, a rain of rockets continued to hit civilians and civilian infrastructure. In Lebanon, there was widespread destruction of public infrastructure, including schools, roads, bridges and fuel-storage sites. Of particular concern was destruction of roads linking Beirut to the population of southern Lebanon.

As a result of targeting of fuel facilities, Beirut had only days of fuel remaining, he said. It was believed that there were sufficient food supplies, including wheat stocks, to cover national consumption for one to three months. The primary concern was the destruction to food-supply chains. Hospitals were functioning, but were overwhelmed and suffering from power outages. Too many ill could not reach hospitals on time, as the roads were blocked. With the number of people in shelters increasing, access to safe drinking water was also a concern. The Lebanese Government had requested international humanitarian assistance and had appealed for medical supplies and other equipment. While the figures remained only indicative, the current planning figures suggested more than half a million conflict-affected people, of which more than one third were children. There might be some 115,000 third-country nationals in Lebanon. More than 100,000 Lebanese were believed to be in Syria, and required assistance.

He said United Nations humanitarian agencies were increasing their capacity to respond on the ground in Lebanon. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was conducting assessments of schools used as temporary shelters for displaced people. It was also preparing to deliver critical emergency supplies. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was undertaking border monitoring in the countries surrounding Lebanon for refugee outflows. It also had a presence in three mountain areas and was in Sidon in the south. The World Food Programme (WFP) had arranged for food loans to Lebanon and had positioned food supplies ready to be deployed. Emergency staff of the World Health Organization (WHO) were undertaking health assessments and monitoring health threats, and coordinating with health partners. UNIFIL colleagues had established joint humanitarian centres and had dispatched convoys with humanitarian aid to some affected villages. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) had deployed a three-person coordination team to Lebanon, who would work closely with the country team, he said. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was undertaking a big and impressive operation.

He said he had called on all parties to live up to their obligations under humanitarian law and grant access to humanitarian workers. Yesterday, he had handed over to Israel's Permanent Representative a formal request to the Government of Israel, which called for safe passage routes for humanitarian corridors in and out of Lebanon, including safe entry for all land-bound cargo via the northern border town of Aarida, safe entry for sea-bound cargo via the port facilities of Beirut, Tripoli and Tyre, and safe entry for air-bound cargo via Beirut Rafik Hariri International Airport. In addition, it was necessary to open humanitarian corridors within Lebanon for onward distribution of urgently needed relief items and the deployment of humanitarian workers. For that purpose, it was planned that United Nations trucks would load the humanitarian cargo in the five entry locations, at United Nations managed and identified cargo consolidation points. He had also requested the parties to identify focal points in their Governments and forces to discuss modalities. A country team was currently in Beirut, working to produce a flash appeal that would address the most pressing humanitarian concerns for a period of three months. He asked for immediate contributions to the appeal, which would be launched on Monday.

He informed the Council that he would be travelling to Lebanon this afternoon, where he would be able to assess the humanitarian situation, consult with Governments and launch the flash appeal on Monday. He would then travel to Jerusalem for consultations with Israeli authorities. He also hoped to visit Gaza, where the situation remained as critical as ever. He intended to report back to the Council next Friday, 28 July.

#### Statements

RIYAD MANSOUR, Permanent Observer of Palestine, said the Council's inaction last week regarding a "reasonable and balanced resolution" had further bolstered Israel's perception that it was immune from the law and that it would not be held accountable for its illegal actions. "As the international community stands idly by, with the Security Council nearly paralyzed, Israel, the occupying Power, continues to kill, wound and maim defenceless Palestinian civilians," he said. "It is without question, that war crimes and State terror are being committed by the occupying Power on a daily basis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem."

He said that, in the span of three weeks alone, the Palestinian death toll had tragically risen to over 100 people, the majority of them civilians, including 16 children. The number of Palestinians injured had climbed to 300. Israeli occupying forces had fired over 1000 artillery shells and had carried out 168 aerial bombings on the Gaza strip. Giving some examples of "the brutality being unleashed against the Palestinian people", he said the international community must condemn such unlawful acts, and must compel the occupying Power to cease such grave breaches and to abide by its obligations under international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention. The protection of civilians must be a priority. They could not be left "at the mercy of the occupier".

After describing also the occupying Power's "wanton destruction of Palestinian property and vital infrastructure", saying they were part of "cruel measures of collective punishment" against the Palestinian people, he stated that it was without doubt that the Council's failure to respond due to a veto had allowed the Israeli Government to continue with its illegal actions with "sheer impunity". The Council had allowed Israel to continue acting beyond the parameters of international law, permitting it to use the most oppressive measures and practices to impose more death, destruction and loss on the Palestinian people under its occupation.

He reiterated that it remained the duty of the Council, in accordance with its authority and responsibilities under the Charter, to act immediately, in order to address the continuing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Council must begin by condemning the most recent Israeli aggression and call for the immediate cessation of hostilities. The Council must also call for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli occupying forces to their original positions before the aggression against the Gaza Strip began. Moreover, the Council must call on Israel to immediately release all democratically elected Palestinian officials being detained since 28 June. "If the Council does not act, we will not soon see an end to the vicious cycle of violence that we are now witnessing, but rather, this dangerous conflict will only be prolonged and compounded," he said.

DAN GILLERMAN ( Israel) said the Council had just heard the Permanent Observer of Palestine describe a situation that seemed very surrealistic, as if the current situation had emanated out of the clear blue sky. There had been no mention of the Israeli soldier, the firing of hundreds of Qassam rockets by the Hamas-led Government on his people. There had been no mention of the fact that Israel had totally withdrawn from Gaza nearly a year ago. There was a certain absurdity in the use of the phrase "occupying Power" when referring to an area that had not been occupied for almost a year. The same was apparent in the Permanent Observer reference to his sisters and brothers of Lebanon and the Israeli aggression that, again, had come out of nowhere. The Council deserved more.

The Council had met just one week ago, he said, and what a difference a week made. The world had learned of the enormous arsenal of missiles that Hizbollah had been amassing in Lebanon, and how deeply Hizbollah had penetrated Lebanese society. The world had learned, again, how ruthless and indiscriminate Hizbollah was. The same international community and the Council had learned how right they had been in repeatedly demanding the disarming of that terrorist monster. Israel had been aware for years of that deadly,

cancerous growth, insidiously invading the beautiful, potentially prosperous country, and had warned about that danger repeatedly. The Council had taken that threat seriously, as witnessed by resolution 1559. Sadly, the peoples of Israel and Lebanon were now reaping the miseries of war, sown long ago, but nurtured by those who chose to turn a blind eye to what had been so clearly happening.

Terrorism had occupied, ravaged and pillaged Lebanon, he said. Terror was the true occupying power of Lebanon. For years, Hizbollah had been amassing thousands of rockets, aimed at Israel, preparing for the attack. While its forces might be concentrated in the south, its tangled web held the entire nation of Lebanon hostage to its violent agenda. Lebanon's Government, for its own political reasons, had chosen conflict with Israel instead of battling the cancer that occupied the body and soul of its country. That cancer must be excised, not partially removed and allowed to fester again.

Since last week, when Israel had been suddenly attacked without any provocation, citizens across northern Israel had been suffering the consequences of Lebanon's failure, he said. Rockets terrorized, maimed and killed people in such cities as Haifa, Nahariya, Tiberias and Safed. Towns across Galilee had been hit by a ceaseless barrage of missiles. Two days ago, two young children playing in St. Paul's Street in the holy city of Nazareth, home town of Jesus, had been mercilessly struck down by a Hizbollah rocket. As he spoke, another wave of dozens of rockets was raining down on cities and towns across northern Israel.

Israel grieved for each civilian casualty, he said. The world had also heard how difficult it was to distinguish between Hizbollah and civilians. That was how cancer worked; attacking healthy cells, spreading throughout the whole body, until healthy and malignant became inseparable. That was exactly the point that Israel had been making for years. Terrorism had been sending its long tentacles through every level of Lebanese society, integrating itself into the very fibre of a nation. Members were told of a so-called "political branch" of Hizbollah. "Do not be misled by this ruse -- an attempt to paint a kinder face on cold-blooded terrorists, who are intent on cold-blooded murder", he said. The Hizbollah Member of Parliament and the terrorists in the hills launching rockets at Israeli civilians both had the same strategy and goal. "These labels cannot be allowed to give legitimacy to a gang of thugs", he added.

He said he could confirm that he had just received official confirmation that, further to the corridor allowing evacuation, a two-way, in and out, humanitarian corridor to meet the needs of those affected on the Lebanese side, had been established. As the Israeli side of the mechanism was being formulated, he assured the Council of his Government's continued cooperation on that important issue.

Before a cessation of hostilities could be contemplated, however, the cessation of terror must be insisted on, he said. A temporary and artificial ceasefire, or whatever term one might use, would only result in an illusionary lull, which would allow that disease to kill again. The international community must finally address the terrorism that occupied Lebanon. The current crisis was not only a danger to Israel and Lebanon, but to the entire region. The terrorism at the root of the crisis was a danger everywhere. Too many nations had learned that lesson.

He said the international community must also address the sponsors of terrorism, Syria and Iran, members of an exclusive club, the axis of terror. Those Governments supported, harboured, trained and financed the terrorists and their murderous acts. As the Council met, they continued to undermine all efforts towards a lasting peace in the region, supplying deadly arms to Hizbollah in the north and to Hamas in Gaza.

Israel welcomed the declaration of the Group of Eight (G-8) leaders, whose 16 July statement provided a basis for progress towards a sustainable peace, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, he said. As a first step towards that goal, Israel demanded the immediate release of Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, as well as Gilad Shilat, who was still being held by Hamas. Israel also demanded the full disarming of Hizbollah, and insisted that Lebanon extend its sovereignty over all its territory, in full compliance with resolution 1559. It must be implemented for Israel's safety, for the stability of the region and the well-being of the world. More than ever, it must be implemented to assure Lebanon's future. Lebanon had had a glorious past and a potential for a bright future, before it had "mortgaged it to terrorists and tyrants". Once terror had been excised, Israel stood ready to embark with the people of Lebanon on a process of rebuilding, renewal, development and cooperation.

NOUHAD MAHAMOUD ( Lebanon ) said the latest outbreak of violence was only another episode of the ongoing turmoil that had plagued the region over the past six decades. "Such a dire situation reveals the urgent and vital need for a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of a tragedy as old as the United Nations itself." The situation had resulted from the chronic failure to respect international law and to abide by resolutions adopted by the Council, the General Assembly and other United Nations organs. The failure in achieving a just peace, based on the respect of legitimate rights, would cause more troubles, more despair and more extremism.

He said, once again, Israel was betting on its excessive military force to settle problems with its neighbours, and Lebanon, once again, was the victim of an aggression whose brutality had exceeded all expectations and previous aggressions. Hiding behind the right to self-defence, revealed their twisted

understanding of international law. Describing the consequences of Israel's military operations, he said Prime Minister Siniora had addressed several touching appeals to the international community, requesting an immediate intervention to end the suffering in Lebanon. That suffering was being caused by the heavy Israeli bombardment by air, land and sea of various parts of the country, and by the tight blockade imposed on its ports.

He said his country appreciated the Secretary-General's sending a senior-level team to the region and welcomed the positive elements in the Secretary-General's message to the Council. It had portrayed an objective picture of the devastating impact caused by the Israeli military operations. That situation called for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire and a solution to the current conflict, by peaceful and diplomatic means. He also appreciated the Secretary-General's position that the United Nations would provide Lebanon with all that was needed in the future, to rebuild what had been destroyed.

His country reiterated its call for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire under the auspices of the United Nations, and the full responsibility of the Lebanese Government to preserve and provide safety to the country and its citizens, by extending its authority over all its territory, including in the area of the Shebaa Farms, as well as the implementation of the 1949 armistice treaty. His Government held Israel responsible for the humanitarian, economic and development catastrophe. It would spare no effort to force Israel to compensate the Lebanese people for the damages it had inflicted upon their infrastructure and institutions. It had declared Lebanon a disaster zone, which would require an immediate Arabic and international plan of action for reconstruction.

He said what his country was going through was an example of the continuous ordeal of the people of the region that had been denied their natural rights to a decent life, as a result of the denigration of the principles of law and justice. Recalling that the Israeli delegate had announced a safe corridor, he said that announcement had been made, as if one was supposed to salute Israel for its compassionate feelings.

He appealed to the international community and to the Council to protect the achievements of the Lebanese people, by supporting their Government in facing the aggression and in continuing on the path of democracy. "Lebanon will remain a country of interaction, a crossroad, and a message for humanity; a nation that Israel has been unable to emulate... and will never be able to", he said in conclusion.

NASSIR ABDULAZIZ AL-NASSER ( [Qatar](#) ) said everyone was fully aware of the grave situation in the Middle East, which had suddenly deteriorated as a result of the excessive use of military force by Israel against Lebanon, under the pretext of self-defence. The great majority of the targets of the Israeli military aggression had been civilian ones, which left no doubt that the aim of the war went beyond its stated objective. The current situation posed a grave threat to the nascent democracy in Lebanon, and was an unwarranted and uneven war. It was most saddening that the Council stood idly by, powerless and unable to put an end to the bloodbath, even though the Israeli aggression was a blatant violation of resolution 1559.

He said it was a delusion to think that the destruction of Lebanon would provide security for Israel, or that it would strengthen the role of the Lebanese Government. What was happening would deepen the hatred and rancour among the peoples for generations to come, and prompt many of those who called for peaceful coexistence between the Arabs and Israel to align themselves with the opposite position.

He said it was deplorable that the lives of innocents had become mere statistics. He asked, what had become of calls for the respect of human rights? How long would the doors of the Council remain closed, while all the peace-loving peoples called upon the Council to act? The terrible conditions experienced by civilians made it incumbent upon the Council to come to their aid.

He said the situation in Gaza was not very different from the one he had described in Lebanon. There, also, military strikes did not spare civilians and targeted the infrastructure. The situation in Gaza was bad to begin with, and had deteriorated even more after the hostilities initiated by the Israeli army in recent weeks. The attempt to deal with the question through implicating other States merely poured fuel on the fire. It was easy to open the gates of hell, but not so easy to close them and prevent their fire from scorching everyone.

He said the Secretary-General had made laudable efforts to mitigate the crisis in the region. Some of his ideas were purposeful, and would perhaps bear fruit in diffusing the festering crisis. Qatar had called upon the Council since the beginning to act promptly to end the bloodshed in Lebanon and contain the crisis before it became a veritable bloodbath. The continued silence of the Council would allow the shedding of more innocent blood.

JOHN R. BOLTON ( [United States](#) ) said that, as the Council met, Hizbollah continued to operate in southern Lebanon with impunity, defying the will of the Security Council, as established in resolution 1559 (2004). He took special note of the important statement from the Arab League, for having the courage and conviction to condemn Hizbollah for its role in instigating the latest round of violence. The United States reiterated its call for the full implementation of resolution 1559, and the full extension of the Lebanese Government's authority over all

of Lebanese territory. If that were to be done, then, Israel would not be subjected to terrorist attacks, nor would the people of Lebanon be subjected to the reign of terror that Hizbollah inflicted.

Mr. Bolton said his Government was studying several proposals on how best to secure implementation of resolution 1559, including the insertion of an international stabilization force. In considering those proposals, it must always been kept at the forefront that the key goal should be to disarm and "defang" Hizbollah, to quote United States Secretary of State Rice. Some Member States had called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire between Israel and Hizbollah, but, he asked, how did they negotiate and maintain a ceasefire with a terrorist organization; one that did not even recognize the right of Israel to exist?

The United States had no confidence that an unconditional ceasefire by itself would be honoured by Hizbollah, he added. That would only allow it time to regroup and plan its next wave of kidnappings and attacks against Israel. The United States sought an end to the violence that afflicted innocent civilians and, for that very reason, it was working for the conditions that would make a real ceasefire "possible and permanent". Its aim was to address the underlying causes of the violence in southern Lebanon; that was the purpose of the Secretary's upcoming trip to the region.

In considering a stabilization force, three broad questions should be asked, he said. The first dealt with whether or not it would be empowered to deal with the real problem, namely Hizbollah. How would such a force deal with Hizbollah armed components, and would it be empowered to deal with arms shipments from countries like Syria and Iran, which supported Hizbollah? What exactly would be the extent of the mandate to deal with the military threat Hizbollah posed? The second set of questions concerned how any new force would relate to UNIFIL, which had already been there for 28 years. And, while hardly an interim force, it was reasonable and responsible to ask how a new force would differ from, and be more effective than UNIFIL. Third, it should be kept in mind that a key prerequisite for the full implementation of 1559 would call for the extension of full sovereignty by the Lebanese Government over its own territory. Would the addition of a new multilateral force help strengthen Lebanese institutions, or just create new multilateral ones? Would such a force contribute to the institutional strength of the Lebanese armed forces? Would it help fully implement resolution 1559?

He said it was not possible to "defang" Hizbollah and Hamas, while ignoring those who backed them with weapons, financing and political support. The nexus of terror between Hizbollah and Hamas and their principle backers, Iran and Syria, could no longer be ignored. The United States called upon Teheran and Damascus to stop acting through their terrorist proxies in the region and to work towards a lasting peace with Israel. And, again, for the fourth time in 22 days, he called on Syria to arrest Khaled Meshal, the Hamas leader who had received safe harbour in Damascus.

There was no moral equivalence between acts of terrorism and Israel's exercise of its legitimate right to self-defence, he said. Of course, the civilian deaths were a matter of great concern to his country. That was a tragedy, and he would not attempt to describe that any other way. The United States had urged the Government of Israel to exercise the greatest possible care in its use of force. But, it was a mistake to ascribe a moral equivalence to civilians who died as the direct result of malicious terrorist acts, the very purpose of which was to kill civilians, and the tragic and unfortunate consequence of civilian deaths as a result of military action taken in self-defence.

He concluded that the United States remained firmly committed to working through the Council, indeed through all diplomatic channels, to find a lasting end to the violence that had plagued the region for too long. Hopefully, from the current crisis, the opportunity would be seized to, "once and forever, dismantle Hizbollah, restore democratic control by Lebanon over all its territory, and lay the foundations that would allow Israel to live in peace with its neighbours".

KENZO OSHIMA ( Japan ) said he supported the Secretary-General's ongoing initiatives to diffuse the crisis, and he would carefully study his proposals. In the past month, there had been widespread and troubling changes in the Middle East. The attacks by Hizbollah, the abduction of Israeli soldiers and the Israeli actions, as well as the further escalation of hostilities, had changed the security situation in the region and had caused extreme concern to the international community. Obstacles to a ceasefire needed to be overcome. He was concerned at the heavy toll of civilian life and the deterioration of the situation in Gaza and Lebanon. In that regard, he fully supported acceleration of humanitarian assistance and assistance for reconstruction. The idea of establishing safe corridors for humanitarian access deserved support.

He said, during the trip to the region last week, the Japanese Prime Minister had expressed support for President Abbas and had announced more aid to the Palestinian people. The G-8 Summit had issued a statement, with recommendations to address the current crisis, to which Japan subscribed. There was a need to ensure cooperation of all the countries concerned, including Iran and Syria, for full implementation of all resolutions, including Council resolution 1559. Disarming militias and extending control by the Lebanese Government over all its territory was also necessary. Any kind of international



monitoring or peacekeeping presence should be designed to implement resolution 1559 and should have the consent of all relevant parties. The Council should act swiftly, and in unity, to create conditions for a cessation of violence that would be sustainable and would address the immediate humanitarian needs.

PETER BURIAN ( Slovakia) urged both parties to cease hostilities and return to political and diplomatic means to resolve the current crisis. He feared that the escalation of the current crisis might have dire consequences not only for the countries involved, but also for regional and global security. There was no military solution to the Middle East conflict. The only way to achieve a comprehensive and lasting settlement was through peaceful negotiations and full implementation of all relevant Council resolutions and the principles defined by the Quartet in the Road Map. While recognizing Israel's right to self-defence against terrorism, he urged Israel to exercise that right with utmost caution and restraint, and not to resort to disproportionate use of force.

He said he was particularly concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Lebanon, and the exodus of the Lebanese people. He called on all parties to secure an unobstructed access for humanitarian assistance. Welcoming the Secretary-General's proposals presented yesterday, he said they should be reflected in a future resolution aimed at reaching a lasting and sustainable settlement. It was important for the Council to respond quickly to the call of G-8 leaders to develop a plan for full implementation of resolutions 1559 and 1680, especially in helping the Government of Lebanon to assume full control over its territory and to disarm all militias.

Underlining that the restoration of calm in Lebanon was an important step for the restoration of the peace process in the Middle East, he expressed concern about the deteriorating situation between Israel and the Palestinians, and the increasing number of civilian casualties on both sides as a result of hostilities and terrorist actions. The Palestinian Government, led by Hamas, had missed an important opportunity by their refusal to accept the principles defined by the Quartet as a precondition for becoming a reliable partner in the peace talks. The international community should provide President Abbas with its full support and address humanitarian needs through the temporary international mechanism. He urged Israel to resume transfers of withheld Palestine tax and customs revenues.

LIU ZHENMIN ( China) noted that, in the past few weeks, the Council had been beset by the worsening situation in the Middle East. At the end of last month, an emergency public meeting had convened and, a week ago, the conflict between Israel and Lebanon had been discussed. The Council had gathered again today, and the conflict showed no sign of easing. The Gaza Strip, southern Lebanon and Beirut were engulfed in flames and the smoke of war. Once quiet cities were now in ruins and the scenes were harrowing.

He said China had made its position clear since the beginning of the crisis. China was opposed to any action that might destabilize the Middle East. It condemned attacks on civilian populations and infrastructure. China had called on all parties to cease hostilities, exercise maximum restraint and prevent further deterioration of the situation. All parties concerned should provide assistance for the delivery of international humanitarian relief and ensure the safety of all relief workers. The international community should step up good offices to create the conditions for a ceasefire. He appreciated the Secretary-General's efforts in that regard, and supported the United Nations significant role. The Council should react as soon as possible to diffuse the crisis in the Middle East, so as to discharge its special responsibility.

Last year, Heads of State had gathered in New York to produce the outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit, which called for the protection of civilians. Today, the world witnessed the death of many civilians and the fleeing of countless refugees. He appealed to all parties to abide by international humanitarian law, to avoid hurting innocent civilians and to allow the delivery of United Nations humanitarian assistance. He urged all parties to honour their commitment to ensure the safety of United Nations personnel. The United Nations Charter entrusted the Council with the primary responsibility in maintaining international peace and security. The international community had been closely watching each move of the Council, with the expectation that the Council would take effective action to diffuse the crisis. He hoped the Council would live up to their expectations and send a strong message, with one voice.

The damages created by the crisis to the countries in the Middle East were enormous, and its impact on the peace process would be long lasting. Hatred and violence could not bring about peace. In that regard, he highlighted the need for a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East crisis. The Secretary-General's package of elements would serve as a good basis to start. China was ready to improve and elaborate on the proposal, so as to create political conditions for an early end to the crisis.

VITALY CHURKIN ( Russian Federation) said the confrontation in the region was causing serious concerns in his country and around the world. The growing number of civilian victims underscored the fact that the threat of a full-scale humanitarian crisis was real. The voice of the Council must be heard. The Council must be guided by the principles of the Charter, and aim at establishing a lasting peace in the region. His country had always been committed to combating terrorism. The abducted soldiers should be released.

While recognizing the right of Israel to self-defence, he said the scale of the use of force went beyond counter-terrorism operations. There were hundreds of Russian citizens in the epicentre of the conflict and he thanked all who had helped in their evacuation. Normalizing the situation would require multifaceted efforts by the international community. The main thing now was the immediate cessation of hostilities. A ceasefire would allow civilians to leave the zone of hostilities. The problems could then be addressed through diplomatic means. There was no military solution to the conflict. The thrust of collective diplomatic efforts must be aimed at searching for practical steps that would place the parties on the track of a political settlement.

ADAMANTIOS TH. VASSILAKIS ( Greece ) said it was high time that the violence stopped and that there was a return to diplomacy. The dire humanitarian situation, the extensive destruction of civilian infrastructure and the indiscriminate loss of civilian life required the immediate attention of the international community. He deplored the suffering of the civilian population, be it in Lebanon, in Israel or in the Occupied Territory, and called on all parties to use the utmost restraint. He also called for an immediate cessation of hostilities, for the immediate and unconditional release of the abducted Israeli soldiers and for the immediate cessation of all attacks on Israeli cities and towns. Israel, in exercising its legitimate right to self-defence, must abide by its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law.

He said the sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and political independence of Lebanon must be safeguarded and respected. The air and sea blockade must be lifted immediately, and the stability of the country, as well as of its legitimate Government, must not be further undermined. It was imperative that the Lebanese Government be supported to take immediate and strong action to prevent further attacks against Israel by Hizbollah. He urged full implementation of resolutions 1559 and 1680. The Secretary-General's proposals constituted a good and sound basis for a sustainable solution.

He said the international community must not lose sight of the agreed common vision for a lasting, comprehensive and viable solution of the Palestine question. Such a solution should be based on all relevant Council resolutions, as well as on the Madrid terms of reference and the principle of land for peace, for the existence of two States, living side by side in peace and security within internationally recognized borders. In that context, he firmly supported the Quartet's position that all members of the Palestinian Government must be committed to non-violence, to the recognition of Israel's right to exist and to the acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Road Map.

OSWALDO DE RIVERO ( Peru ) said his country deplored the violence in the Middle East and the loss of hundreds of human lives. The escalation of violence and its extension in Lebanon had been provoked by Hizbollah's attack, which had given rise to Israel's military reaction in Lebanon. The abductions and attacks had prompted the Israeli Defense Forces to fight the actions of armed groups, which had not renounced violence and formed the Government, or part of the Government, of the Palestinian Authority and Lebanon, respectively. While he recognized Israel's right to defend itself, it should, however, exercise that right in accordance with the United Nations Charter and avoid disproportionate use of force.

The Council should confront the conflict in Lebanon with a double action, including by obtaining a cessation of hostilities and an immediate humanitarian truce, he said. The Council should also work through a lasting peace agreement in accordance with resolutions 1559 and 1680 -- an agreement that re-established the sovereignty of the Lebanese Government over all of its territory, including the disarmament of Hizbollah and of all the forces that operated outside of the authority of the Lebanese State. He, therefore, supported the Secretary-General's proposal and was confident that the elements it contained would be taken into account by all concerned parties.

Concerning Palestine, he said any agreement should take into account the requirements that the Quartet had demanded of the Government of the Palestinian Authority. In other words, Hamas must recognize Israel, renounce violence and respect the agreements previously accepted by the Palestinian Authority itself. A negotiated solution of two States was a utopia, so long as one of the parties denied the right of the other to exist. He firmly supported determined actions for the release of the Israeli soldiers kidnapped by terrorist groups in Lebanon and in Gaza, as well as of the elected Palestinian Authority officials recently illegally detained by Israel. He also favoured consideration of UNIFIL's substantive reinforcement and transformation into a force that would support the Lebanese authorities to guarantee the full implementation of resolutions 1559 and 1680. While achieving a cessation of hostilities, the humanitarian situation in Lebanon must be addressed. Peru supported the cessation of hostilities, and called for an immediate humanitarian truce that would allow access by humanitarian agencies and the evacuation of civilians and third country nationals.

BEGUM TAJ ( United Republic of Tanzania ) said her delegation was alarmed and saddened by the destruction of Lebanon and Gaza, which had resulted in death and injuries to innocent civilians. Essential supplies were running out, and a huge humanitarian crisis was unfolding, calling for the international community's urgent response. While calling for maximum restraint, a plan to end the crisis could be quickly assembled. The

elements proposed by the Secretary-General yesterday had her full support. It was essential that the Council respond by a resolution, preceded by a press statement along the lines discussed in previous meetings.

She said an immediate requirement was to bring hostilities to an end, in order to stop further loss and suffering. She also hoped that Mr. Egeland's request for the establishment of corridors to and inside Lebanon would be granted. With regard to the Blue Line, she recommended the strengthening of UNIFIL to make it more responsive and effective, as the Force could not discharge its mandate in the current form. In that regard, her delegation called for a more robust mission with a new concept of operation. It was also not too early to begin reflecting on the mammoth task of reconstructing Lebanon. She supported the call for an international conference, in that regard. A conference should focus on the delineation of the border with Israel and resolve the dispute over the Shebaa Farms. She reaffirmed the need to find a lasting and comprehensive solution to the problem, based on relevant United Nations resolutions and the Quartet's Road Map.

KARYN PIERCE ( United Kingdom) said her delegation was urgently studying the Secretary-General's proposals. Her country was gravely concerned by the escalating crisis in the Middle East. Hostilities must stop. She welcomed the statement by the delegate of Lebanon regarding his country's desire to extend full control over all its territory. The crisis had been caused by Hizbollah. It had been a calculated attempt to further destabilize the region, without any regard for the people of Lebanon or in the region. The quickest way to end the crisis would be the release of the soldiers. Hizbollah was supported by Syria and Iran. Long term stability was only possible if Syria and Iran ended their activities in that regard. She urged the two countries to use their influence to rein in Hizbollah.

She said her country had made it clear to Israel, repeatedly and forcefully, that it must act with the utmost restraint in defending itself. Welcoming United Nations efforts to deliver humanitarian relief, she said the United Kingdom would give 2 million pounds, and send advisers to the region. She supported the call for establishing humanitarian corridors.

There were serious obstacles to reaching a ceasefire, she said. That underscored the need to create the conditions necessary for such a ceasefire. For that, the Israeli soldiers must be released immediately, and Hizbollah must stop its attacks. An international force could help the Government of Lebanon to implement resolution 1559. A political framework for Lebanon's future was also necessary.

She was deeply concerned about the situation in Gaza. She reiterated the call for the immediate and unconditional release of the abducted soldier, and condemned the rocket attacks on Israel. Israeli actions in Gaza must be proportionate and in accordance with international law. Real peace could only come through a lasting settlement. The priority must be to create conditions for resumption of real negotiations. Negotiation was the only viable way to move the peace process forward according to the Road Map.

ELLEN MARGRETHE LØJ ( Denmark) said she had previously been concerned that the prospects for lasting peace in the Middle East were fading. Today, those prospects seemed more remote than ever. The biggest challenge facing the Council, the United Nations and the broader international community was to work with the parties to bring about lasting peace and stability, and to bring hope back to the people of the region. Last week, Denmark had condemned in the strongest terms those behind the kidnapping of the Israeli soldiers and the firing of missiles into Israel. It had stressed that such actions were simply irresponsible and unacceptable. Without a doubt, Hizbollah bore full responsibility for those deadly crimes. Those extremist elements and those that supported them were equally responsible. What she had seen and heard over the past few days had only confirmed that those behind those actions were "opponents of stability and lasting peace".

She said that, being attacked, as Israel had been, granted the right to self-defence. Defensive actions, however, must be in line with international law. Israel must ensure that its response was proportional and measured, and carried out with full respect for a State's obligation to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure in times of war. Denmark was gravely concerned about the mounting toll of civilian casualties and the extensive damage to the civilian infrastructure. Israel must show the utmost restraint and avoid disproportional action. Denmark stood firmly behind Prime Minister Siniora's Government in Beirut. A failure of his Government could result in further polarization and radicalization. The overall challenge was to avoid the strengthening of extremism in the region in general.

Trapped in the middle of those grim hostilities were the Lebanese people and other countries' citizens, she said. Their democratically elected Government was struggling to cope with the burden. The humanitarian crisis was deepening with each passing hour. Assistant Secretary-General Jan Egeland's "gripping assessment" of the gravity of the situation underscored the urgent need for international action. She, therefore, strongly supported the agreement to create "humanitarian corridors" to provide desperately needed assistance to those under siege. Her Government was ready to respond immediately to the United Nations flash appeal that was being prepared.

She said there was an urgent need to stop hostilities and return to the political process. At the same time, there could be no return to the status quo. She strongly supported the Secretary-General's efforts and hoped that all relevant parties would engage themselves in the process and support it. The concrete proposals were still being studied carefully. The best solution lay in supporting the Lebanese Government's efforts to restore full sovereignty over all its territory and to exercise the sole right to use of force on that territory. That was essential if Council resolution 1559 and 1680 were to be fully implemented. A stabilization force, meanwhile, was needed to assist the Lebanese Government in that considerable task. Such a force could only be effective if all relevant parties agreed with its deployment and mandate. For Gaza, a lasting solution must be found that thoroughly addressed all outstanding issues.

NANA EFFAH-APENTENG ( [Ghana](#) ) said he was appalled by the violence that was going on and saddened that the Council had not been able to do the minimum required of it under the Charter, which was to call for an immediate ceasefire. He totally rejected the "deliberate and systematic undermining of international law and international humanitarian law". The methods and actions of Hamas and Hizbollah were objectionable. The captured Israeli soldiers must be given their freedom immediately. But, fairness also demanded that one did not pretend there were no innocent victims of Israeli operations, the so-called collateral damage. It was not Israel's sovereign right to protect its civilian population that was the issue. It was the manner in which the country had gone about exercising that right.

He said it was regrettable that Israel had rejected the Secretary-General's call for an immediate cessation of hostilities as premature. Continued fighting would only worsen the situation and cause further disenchantment. He supported, in that regard, the Secretary-General's proposals. The proposed deployment of an expanded international peacekeeping force along the Blue Line was of the utmost importance. The effectiveness of such a mission would depend mainly on its military capabilities. It must be stronger than the militias on the ground.

The Council must not allow its integrity to be compromised, by failing to take a firm position on the situation in Lebanon, he said. The minimum the Council could do was to support the Secretary-General's appeal for an immediate cessation of hostilities and examine the other elements of the Secretary-General's proposals. It was also important to assist the Lebanese Government to establish full control over its territory and abide by its commitment to implement resolutions 1559 and 1680. "By its silence, or perceived paralysis, this Council is lending credence to accusations of selectivity and double standards in its consideration of issues. Who can fault those who are agitating for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council?"

CESAR MAYORAL ( [Argentina](#) ) said the primary responsibility fell on the extremists groups Hamas and Hizbollah and their provocative actions of 25 June and 12 July, respectively. Argentina unequivocally condemned those actions and the rocket attacks against Israel, which had caused death and injuries to numerous innocent Israeli civilians. Those terrorist attacks should immediately cease and the three Israeli soldiers be released immediately and unconditionally. Argentina had also expressed grave concern for the disproportionate and excessive use of force by Israel. He reiterated Argentina's condemnation of military actions that had caused the death of hundreds of Palestinians and Lebanese innocent civilians and the destruction of the basic civil infrastructure in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon. While Israel had the legitimate right to self-defence in accordance with the United Nations Charter, such a right should be exercised in full conformity with international law.

Immediate measures should be taken in order to alleviate the suffering of the Lebanese civilian population, he said. The first step, in that regard, should be the cessation of hostilities and the granting of access to the affected areas to the humanitarian organizations. The establishment of humanitarian corridors was essential, in order for the assistance to reach the affected population and to carry out the necessary evacuations. For that reason, he believed the Council should urgently act and declare a cessation of hostilities. At the same time, it should seek solutions for the most urgent issues and should work to create the conditions for a lasting and sustainable ceasefire. Returning to the status quo was impossible, which was why he believed the proposals put forward by the Secretary-General's envoys were a good basis to solve the underlying problems in the south of Lebanon and to implement resolutions 425, 426, 1559 and 1680.

Argentina was ready to work on the basis of those and other ideas, with the aim of drafting a resolution that set the framework for a lasting solution to the conflict between Israel and Lebanon. His country was also concerned for the situation that UNIFIL was facing. UNIFIL should be able to carry out its mandate and, for that reason, its freedom of movement should not be restricted. With regard to the Gaza Strip, he reiterated Argentina's concern for the suffering of the civilian population. In the immediate term, a package of measures should be considered, comprising the elements including the halt of Qassam rocket attacks against Israel, the release of the Israeli soldier, the cessation of the excessive use of force by Israel, the withdrawal of Israel from the Territory and the acceptance by the Government of the Palestinian Authority of the conditions set out by the Quartet.

The humanitarian situation was also very serious and, in that regard, he insisted that the crossing points should be reopened immediately, to allow for the import of food, medicines and other basic goods, he said. He called on the donor community to respond to the humanitarian needs of Gaza. Argentina called, once again, for the renewal of efforts aimed at achieving a just and lasting peace in the Middle East based on Council resolutions, the Road Map, the Madrid terms of reference and the principle of land for peace. The Council should rise to the challenge and act with determination to fulfil its responsibilities regarding the maintenance of international peace and security.

BASILE IKOUBE ( Congo ) said it was undeniable that the situation was extremely alarming. It was urgent that an effective response be provided, in order to relieve the plight of innocent civilians, particularly women and children. The time had come to seek appropriate solutions. The destructive violence must give way to a peaceful settlement and an end to the fighting, a condition that was necessary to relieve the plight of civilians. The Council must clearly call upon the protagonists to cease hostilities. That was the least it could do today. It was unacceptable and inconceivable that the Council would maintain a lengthy silence, or limit itself to speculations on the outcome of armed conflict, as no military victory would resolve the situation.

More than ever, the Council must heed the appeals of leaders and not abandon them to their own fate, he said. The Council must seek to ease the suffering of civilian populations, by establishing conditions that would allow for humanitarian assistance. He called on all parties to comply with the principles of international humanitarian law. It was also necessary to give diplomacy a chance. He welcomed the many emerging initiatives and welcomed, also, the Secretary-General's personal involvement. The results of the Secretary-General's mission to the region provided a good basis for the settlement of the crisis. Such an approach would reduce tensions and open the door to a lasting solution to the crisis in the Middle East.

Speaking in his national capacity, Council President JEAN-MARC DE LA SABLIÈRE ( France ) said Hizbollah bore responsibility for the unleashing of hostilities in Lebanon. He condemned in the strongest possible terms the continued firing of rockets into Israel. He also condemned, however, the disproportionate response by Israel, which was holding the Lebanese people hostage, killing large numbers of civilians and causing substantial material damage in Lebanon. He reiterated the call for an immediate cessation of hostilities. Humanitarian corridors in Lebanon and between Lebanon and the outside were essential to guarantee the safety of displaced persons and to deliver humanitarian aid. In order for a solution to be lasting, Hizbollah should be disarmed and the Government of Lebanon should extend its control to the south.

He said Israeli military operations were weakening Hizbollah's military capabilities, but they were also fuelling hate. By systematically destroying the country's infrastructure, Israel was greatly weakening the Lebanese State. Yet, a strong Lebanese State was needed, so it could extend its authority to the whole of its territory. The Secretary-General's proposals provided the basis for developing a coherent solution. The Council must face up to its responsibilities and begin, as soon as possible, finalizing a resolution that would offer the framework for a lasting settlement of the crisis.

His country was also concerned at the continued deterioration in the security and humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, he said. While recognizing Israel's legitimate right to defend itself against terrorism, he condemned the recent disproportionate military operations against Palestinian towns and refugee camps. The Palestinian Authority, for its part, must take all necessary measures, immediately, to stop the firing of rockets. It must also encourage the release of the kidnapped Israeli soldier. He reaffirmed that the Hamas-led Government must adhere to the three principles required by the Quartet. It remained essential to protect the Palestinian Authority as an institution and forerunner of a State. He, therefore, called on Israel to release the Palestinian officials and political leaders.

He said, in the longer term, the international community must not lose sight of the objective set out in the Road Map. His country remained deeply concerned at the continuation of settlement construction and the building of the separation wall within the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Those practices compromised the future establishment of a viable Palestinian State.

BASHAR JA'AFARI ( Syria ) said the Council, entrusted with maintenance of international peace and security, met against the background of war crimes perpetrated by Israel against Palestine and Lebanon. The Council was called upon to hold Israel accountable for its crimes and bring the perpetrators to justice. Israel and those who supported it had come up with surprising distortions of concepts and facts. One of them, that an Israeli individual was of a different value than other individuals, especially if they were Arabs. The suffering of one Israeli prisoner was equal to that of thousands of Arab and Palestinian prisoners.

He said Israel's claim to the right of self defence was another distortion. Israel was occupying the Palestinian and Arab territories and violated international and international humanitarian law. How could the occupier, the aggressor claim self-defence? he asked. While understanding efforts made by some countries to

transport citizens outside Lebanon, he asked that those countries pressure Israel to put an end to the bloodbath. The Israeli aggression aimed at undermining the credibility of the United Nations itself.

While Israel had declared that it reserved the right to interpret the question of unilateral self-defence, it had ignored the rights of others to defend themselves against aggression and occupation. The problem was primarily a problem of occupation and settlements, of displacement of people in the region and depriving them of their right to return to their homeland. Lebanon had suffered a long time as a result of Israeli invasions. He called on the Council to shoulder its responsibilities and to put an immediate end to the aggression against the Lebanese and Palestinian people. Those actions should be based on the sovereignty of Lebanon against Israeli aggression. Whoever defended that aggression obstructed the role of the Council. Instability in the region was caused by the continued occupation of territories.

He said the statement made by the representative of the United States, claiming that Syria supported terrorism, was completely unfounded. Since 1986, Syria had called for a conference to define terrorism. The United States had always voted against a resolution calling for such a conference. Syria had dealt with the Council's counter-terrorism committees responsibly. It had also cooperated with the United States in countering terrorism, by providing information that had saved the lives of many Americans. Syria considered President George Washington a hero, because he had liberated his country. It did not consider him a terrorist. Consideration of counter-terrorism should be based on purely legal considerations, not on political agendas. As for accusations against his country by Israel, he recalled the State terror and the history of terrorism practiced by Israel itself. One of the first victims of that terrorism had been Count Bernadotte. The real terrorism in the region was the continued occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories.

KIRSTI LINTONEN ( [Finland](#) ), on behalf of the European Union and associated States, said the Union was acutely concerned at the situation in the Middle East, particularly the deteriorating humanitarian situation and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. The Union deplored the loss of civilian lives on all sides. The developments posed a serious threat to peace and security in the region. She called for the release of abducted soldiers and an immediate cessation of hostilities. While she recognized Israel's legitimate right to self-defence, she urged it to exercise utmost restraint and not to resort to disproportionate action. All parties must do everything possible to protect civilian populations and refrain from actions in violation of international humanitarian law. It was urgent to stop violence and return to diplomacy. Only a political process of negotiation could bring lasting peace to the region. She expressed full support for the Secretary-General's efforts and welcomed the Council's active role, including through examining the possibility of an international monitoring presence.

Concerning developments in Lebanon and Israel, she condemned the attacks by Hizbollah on Israel and the abduction of two Israeli soldiers, and called for their immediate and unconditional release, and for the cessation of all attacks on Israeli towns and cities. The Union recalled the need for the Lebanese State to restore its sovereignty over the whole of its national territory and to do its utmost to prevent such attacks. Expressing support for Lebanese Prime Minister Siniora, she urged the full implementation of Council resolutions 1559 and 1680, including disbanding and disarming of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, and strict respect of Lebanon's sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and political independence. Continued escalation would only aggravate the vicious circle of violence and retribution.

She also appealed to all parties to ensure the safe and speedy passage from Lebanon of all citizens of European Union member States, as well as other expatriates who wished to leave Lebanon. The Union called on Israel not to hinder shipping in international waters.

Concerning the situation in Gaza, she said the Union remained deeply concerned at the deteriorating situation between Israel and the Palestinians, and deplored the loss of civilian life it had brought. She reiterated the Union's call for the immediate and unconditional release of the abducted Israeli soldier, and called on the Palestinian leadership to end violence and terrorist activities, including the firing of rockets on Israeli territory. She called on both parties to alleviate the desperate humanitarian situation of the civilian population and urged Israel to engage in the restoration of the destroyed civilian infrastructure. The Israeli air strikes on Gaza's only power plant had had a far-reaching impact on Gaza's hospitals, food-production facilities, and water and sanitation systems. In addition to the Rafah crossing, she urged that other border crossings, such as Karni, be opened, to allow the passage of humanitarian aid and basic products to Gaza, and the safe return of Palestinians currently on the Egyptian side of the border.

She said the Union commended the efforts of President Abbas to create the widest possible consensus in support of the objectives of the Road Map. The Union was ready to work with a Palestinian Government that implemented the three principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel's right to exist and acceptance of existing agreements and obligations, including the Road Map. The Union was committed to pressing ahead with the further expansion of the proposed temporary international mechanism established, in order to channel

humanitarian aid directly to the Palestinians. The Union encouraged donors to make full use of that mechanism. She urged Israel to resume transfers of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues.

Concluding, she said the crisis underlined the need for the negotiation of a just and lasting settlement. The Union called on both parties to demonstrate, urgently, an active commitment to the search for a negotiated two-State solution. The Union supported the Quartet's central role in that process.

Speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, HAMIDON ALI ( [Malaysia](#)) said that the Movement's position on the situation in the region was clear and consistent, as had been pronounced in the Council Chamber on many occasions in the past, and as contained in the statements dated 6 and 19 July that had been transmitted to the Council. He reaffirmed those positions and called on the Council to consider them seriously during the ensuing deliberations. He was not going to repeat them today, as members of the Council could better use the time at their disposal to deliberate on practical measures to end the crisis and facilitate the efforts to end the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territories, thereby achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive solution in the Middle East, which should be the overarching framework, in that regard.

The Movement was gravely concerned about the deteriorating situation and the escalation of violence in the Middle East, particularly in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Lebanon. He condemned all acts of terror, violence and destruction, as well as attacks against civilians and civilian property and infrastructure. He also condemned the abduction and detention of cabinet ministers, Government officials, soldiers and other individuals, and demanded their immediate and unconditional release. Innocent human beings, including infants and children, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Lebanon and Israel were dying and suffering. The life of each human being was sacred and must be protected. However, condemning and deploring the death and destruction would not bring an end to violence, hostilities and casualties in the region on their own. The solution lay in, and could be achieved through, the Council and by the parties in the Middle East.

The Non-aligned Movement appealed to the Council to take decisive action without delay, he said. The barbaric and senseless killings and total madness in the Middle East must be halted immediately. The Council held the key to peace, security and tranquility in the region. The delay in taking action would result in more death and destruction. Concrete proposals, old and new, including by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, were before the Council. "We need not remind you of your duties and responsibilities. You know exactly what they are and what needs to be done, and you must do that now, in order to save the lives of other human beings and, equally important, in order to avoid catastrophic consequences in the region," he stressed.

PETER MAURER ( [Switzerland](#)) said respect for law was not a matter for negotiation. International humanitarian law prohibited attacks on civilians who were not directly participating in hostilities. Parties to a conflict were obliged to distinguish between civilian and military infrastructure, to respect the principle of proportionality in all military operations and to refrain from any form of collective punishment against the population. He hoped the Security Council would be in a position to take action without delay. He regretted that, despite the gravity of the situation, the Council had not yet been able to obtain a consensus on measures to be taken. Diplomacy must take the place of military confrontation.

He said Switzerland condemned all acts of violence, provocation and terrorism. There was no doubt that Israel had the right to protect its territory and its population against such acts. Nevertheless, the reaction of the Israeli armed forces in Lebanon was clearly disproportionate. The repeated air strikes against civilian targets were a serious violation of international humanitarian law, as was the indiscriminate firing of rockets by Hizbollah against population centres in Israel.

He said the situation in Lebanon must not cause the international community to lose sight of the scale of the humanitarian, economic and social crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in Gaza. Living conditions for the Palestinian population had become intolerable in recent months. According to international humanitarian law, it was the responsibility of Israel, as the occupying Power, to ensure that the basic needs of the Palestinian civilian population were provided for, and to facilitate the rapid, secure and unimpeded passage of equipment and personnel.

As a response to the conflict in Lebanon, he called on the parties to conclude an immediate ceasefire. The large-scale destruction of civil infrastructure had not only caused a large number of deaths, but was also preventing civilians from leaving the combat zones and seriously hampering humanitarian activity. He also called for the creation of humanitarian corridors, which would give humanitarian personnel full and unrestricted access to victims. He also supported the proposal for an international security and monitoring force to be sent to south Lebanon. Such a mission would need to have a mandate to guarantee a ceasefire, secure the Israeli-Lebanese border and facilitate a negotiated settlement of territorial disputes. The force could also take temporary control of the disputed Shebaa farms territory.

He said the establishment of an international force should be supplemented by other political and security measures. It was particularly necessary for the Lebanese Government to ensure the sovereignty and the control of its entire territory, and a framework to secure funding for aid, reconstruction and development was also essential. It was imperative not just to manage the present crisis, but to find a real solution for all the unresolved conflicts in the Middle East. The crisis in Lebanon, like that in the Palestinian Occupied Territory, could not be viewed solely from the perspective of terrorism and counter-terrorism. A global approach to settle the totality of Israeli-Arab and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts was required.

RONALDO MOTA SARDENBERG ( [Brazil](#)) said that the conflict, deplorable per se, was at this time characterized by rapidly growing use of indiscriminate force. Brazil strongly condemned the attacks perpetrated by Hizbollah, initiated by the kidnapping of two military personnel. It also condemned the attacks carried out in Gaza. No cause or grievance justified terrorism, which he firmly repudiated. Brazil reiterated the provisions of resolution 1559 that called for the dismantling and disarmament of all militias in Lebanon.

Although recognizing the right of self-defence by Israel, his delegation believed that Israel should act with utmost restraint, in order to avoid further civilian casualties and damage, which were likely to spur a new circle of violence, causing more victims. Such restraint would be key to any solution to the present crisis. Brazil condemned the disproportionate use of force that had resulted in the loss of innocent lives and heavy damage to the Lebanese and Palestinian infrastructure, in flagrant violation of the most basic principles of international humanitarian law. All forces in the conflict should allow for humanitarian assistance to immediately reach the affected population.

At least seven Brazilian nationals, including three children, had perished as a consequence of Israeli military incursions in southern Lebanon, he continued. His Government had presented condolences to all victims and their families, and was in contact with the Government of Turkey to arrange for the evacuation of a large number of Brazilian nationals. Over 70,000 Brazilians currently lived in the affected regions.

Peace could only be attained by the resumption of diplomatic process, involving all interested parties, he said. He supported the efforts to achieve a ceasefire and the release of the abducted Israeli soldiers. The initiatives being undertaken by the Secretary-General must be seriously considered by the Council, with a view to obtaining an immediate cessation of hostilities and setting up conditions for achieving a durable solution to the crisis. Through the Security Council, the international community must urgently fulfil its responsibilities and take immediate action to prevent further escalation of the conflict. A lack of action from the Council in such a flagrant case that threatened international peace and security would only contribute to weakening its credibility. Stability ultimately relied on the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in all its aspects. Unilateral and other types of non-negotiated solutions were not likely to bring about peace. The international community must not remain passive at the deterioration of the conflict and the destruction of Lebanon as a viable nation.

FAWZI BIN ABDUL MAJEED SHOBOKSHI ( [Saudi Arabia](#)) said his delegation appreciated the Secretary-General's efforts to bring about peace and security. He agreed on the need to have the international community assume its role to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian issue. No one would doubt Israel's ability to slap together justifications to pursue its aggression, exposing the region to greater tension. This all-out war pursued by Israel could not be justified, nor could its planned destruction, premeditated killings and planned sabotage. Today's international relations were in a dangerous situation, due to the primacy of the concept of the use of force over international law, undermining the legitimate right of the use of force as enshrined by the principles of the Charter. Those principles had been converted into an instrument to justify Israel's aggression.

He said there was an urgent need to end the barbaric campaign to bring about collective punishment in violation of international law. History would not pardon the international community's failure to ensure justice for the Palestinian people and the people of Lebanon. The Council's failure, with respect to its duties, which had allowed for the ongoing occupation and settlements, continued to be the very reason for the failure of the peace process in the past, and the failure to implement the Road Map. Statements would not be followed up, if they failed to address the root causes of the problem, namely occupation.

Saudi Arabia condemned the war pursued by Israel, and its premeditated and unlimited violations of human rights, he said. He issued a warning to the international community regarding the seriousness of the situation in the region, which was sliding to a circle of violence, the results of which would be difficult to predict. Israel must compensate for the material damage caused by its aggression. The war and hegemony by Israel in the region were at fault. He supported Lebanon's Government and its efforts to uphold the country's independence and sovereignty, as well as its efforts to expand its authority throughout its territory. He called on the international community to shoulder its legal humanitarian



responsibility to end the Israeli aggression and protect the Lebanese people and infrastructure. He also called for an end to the blockade imposed by Israel on the Palestinian people.

YOUCEF YOUSFI ( [Algeria](#) ) said Lebanon had, for the second week, been subjected to intensive bombardments that killed civilians and destroyed infrastructures. He condemned the blunt attacks against Lebanon. The incident at the heart of the conflict could not explain the disproportionate force and collective punishment Israel was inflicting upon Lebanon. The international community must condemn the aggression and impose a ceasefire. He called upon the Council to assume its responsibilities under the Charter and to respond, without delay, to the request of Lebanon to establish a ceasefire and to have Israel lift the blockade. Lebanon should extend its control over its whole territory, including the Shebaa Farms. He appealed to the international community of donors to reply generously to the distress call of the Lebanese Government.

He said the dramatic situation in Lebanon and the repression in the Occupied Palestinian Territory showed the need to urgently find a comprehensive and just solution to the Palestinian question, as legitimate resistance to occupation would not disappear. Apart from the excessive use of force in Lebanon, Israel, through thinly veiled threats, was risking the spectre of violence in the whole region. That should not be allowed to continue. The Council must oppose the attempts of countries to impose their own vision of peace on its weaker neighbours. A true and lasting peace could only be brought about by the withdrawal by Israel from all occupied territories. Such a peace should be based on relevant resolutions and on the principle of land for peace.

ABDEL FATAH ABDEL AZIZ ( [Egypt](#) ) said the current source of threat and aggravation was not only the continuous military operations perpetuated by Israeli forces in Palestine and Lebanon, but also the feelings of frustration spreading throughout the Arab population towards the Council's position in the face of repeated Israeli acts, serving long-term strategic goals through military force, in total contradiction to what all strove for -- namely the achievement of a comprehensive and sustainable peace through negotiations, based on justice, parity and mutual interests. The core issue of the matter was not the capture of one Israeli soldier in Gaza or two others in Lebanon, but Israel's continued occupation of Arab lands in Palestine, Lebanon and Syria since 1967, as well as its continued efforts to alter the situation on the ground, in a manner that diminished any opportunity for Arab parties to regain their legitimate rights to their rightful lands. The Council had completely failed in that issue, despite numerous resolutions that confirmed that the only solution to end the circle of violence was to end Israeli occupation of Arab lands.

He said it had to be made clear that Arab countries accepted mediation efforts outside the context of the United Nations, as a way to bridge the differences in opinion, with the aim of reaching a just peace that achieved the interests of both the Arabs and Israelis. That did not in any way imply that the Council, or any of its members, had relinquished their responsibility towards the Middle East peace process. While the Council had held many sessions on the protection of children during armed conflict, it had failed to provide the minimal level of protection to civilians and children in Palestine and Lebanon, as an exception from conflicts in other areas of the world.

Throughout the past, Egypt had worked with different parties to halt any escalation, and had focused on diplomacy to contain repeated crises in the region, he said. Egypt would continue those efforts, in order to reach a ceasefire that would open the door for a comprehensive political settlement that saved the lives of innocent civilians, alleviated the suffering of peoples and combated violence and extremism. In that context, Egypt had closely followed the ongoing consultations on the elements of the Secretary-General's proposal yesterday, as a possible basis for a settlement. Egypt believed, however, that any negotiations on a settlement necessitated a firm decision by the Council today for an immediate and sustainable ceasefire in both Palestine and Lebanon. The Council must also address the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in Gaza, in addition to answering Lebanon's call for relief. The land and sea blockade imposed on Lebanon by Israel must end, and Lebanon must be allowed to receive needed humanitarian assistance.

As soon as that was accomplished, he said, it would be possible to negotiate some of the elements that could constitute a basis for temporary arrangements between the concerned parties, including the exchange of prisoners and detainees, asserting Lebanese sovereignty on all of its territories, thus allowing it to implement the 1949 truce agreement and the Taif agreement. In addition, Israel must acknowledge its responsibility for the destruction it had inflicted on Palestine and Lebanon and its responsibility to provide compensation for damages. All those elements could constitute a prelude to swift commencement of the final status negotiations on all tracks under United Nations auspices and according to a plan of action to be monitored by the Organization as an honest broker entrusted with implementing relevant resolutions, particularly 242, 338, 425, 1515 and the principle of land for peace.

The current situation placed an added responsibility on the Council, not just to express words of sympathy for the victims, condemn the targeting of civilians and infrastructure or provide humanitarian assistance, but to work to defuse the core problem that generated one crisis after another. Egypt believed in the Council's ability to succeed in facing that challenge and upholding its responsibilities in attaining peace and security in the Middle East, through taking credible measures that led to the end of Israeli occupation and a comprehensive peace.

BERIT ENGE ( Norway ) called for an urgent cessation of hostilities. Hizbollah must cease its armed attacks and return the abducted Israeli soldiers immediately. While recognizing Israel's inherent right to self-defence, its use of force must satisfy the requirements of necessity, as well as proportionality. It was imperative that the civilian population be protected, in accordance with international humanitarian law. Indiscriminate and excessive use of force was prohibited, and Norway urged Israel not to resort to disproportionate action. It was necessary to keep the violence and conflict from expanding into neighbouring areas.

Calling on the parties to end hostilities immediately and to take all necessary measures to protect the population against the consequences of war, she stressed that civilians must be protected and given safe passage. Moreover, humanitarian and relief workers must be given unrestricted and safe access. All protected persons who desired to leave the areas concerned, including foreign nationals, were entitled to do so, in accordance with international law.

A peaceful solution could not be found through military action, she said. Only a political process and negotiations involving all parties could yield a comprehensive and lasting peace. It was necessary for the parties to return to the negotiating table as soon as possible. She fully supported the efforts of the Secretary-General and called for active and urgent Security Council action in that regard. Norway also expressed its full support for Prime Minister Siniora of Lebanon, and called on all parties to respect the political and territorial independence of Lebanon.

She also expressed deep concern over the continued deteriorating situation in Gaza, saying that Israel's attacks on vital infrastructure constituted a form of collective punishment, which was unacceptable. Regarding the humanitarian needs, she said that her Government had decided to allocate \$30 million in humanitarian assistance to the region. That contribution would be channelled through non-governmental organizations and the United Nations.

ZEID RA'AD AL-HUSSEIN ( Jordan ) said his Government strongly condemned the Israeli aggression on Lebanon, its use of force and actions that were beyond the scope of international law. What was taking place in Lebanon was in contradiction with the vision of a region living in peace and prospering under the fruits of reform efforts and democratic processes. The region would suffer significantly as a result of the excessive Israeli military operations in Lebanon and the Occupied Palestine Territory, but also as the result of the positions of some radical groups. Those groups had chosen to advocate and promote violence over contributing to building a sustainable peace. He supported Lebanon's unity and the enablement of its Government to exercise full sovereignty over all its territory.

He said the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was increasingly deteriorating, in light of the continuing excessive military operation by the occupying forces. He called on both sides, Israelis and Palestinians, to respect all signed agreements, including the understandings reached in Sharm el Sheikh, and to end all measures that would escalate and aggravate the situation further. He called on Israel to respect international law and to end all practices that violated the human rights of the Palestine population. He called on the Palestinian groups to deal with the situation in a way that would serve Palestinian interests and aspirations.

Peace in the Middle East necessitated an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories and reaching a final and agreed solution to the Palestinian refugee problem, he said. To achieve that, all concerned parties needed to undertake responsible steps, supported by a strong political will, to stop the current escalation and to immediately resume negotiations. He called for a ceasefire and the exercise of maximum restraint.

REZLAN ISHAR JENIE ( Indonesia ) said the rapidly deteriorating situation in Lebanon and Palestine had brought the region once more into deep crisis, and had taken both countries to the edge of humanitarian catastrophe, with repercussions far beyond the region. The Government of Indonesia was in full solidarity with the people and the Governments of Lebanon and Palestine. In his briefing to the Council yesterday, the Secretary-General had underlined the current precarious situation, proposing a package of concrete actions to defuse the conflict. He expressed appreciation in that regard. Israel's military actions clearly constituted a flagrant violation of international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and the other rules of humanitarian law. He strongly condemned that, and urged the international community to act to halt it. Given the dire humanitarian situation and continuing loss of innocent civilian life and destruction, he said a sense of urgency was needed. In view of the scale of the destruction and casualties resulting from Israel's indiscriminate attacks and disproportionate use of force, it was difficult for him to comprehend why the Council was still unable to respond quickly and effectively.

In that connection, he joined the call for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire as the most critical step towards speedy delivery of humanitarian assistance, particularly to civilians, in the conflict areas. He fully supported the establishment of an international peacekeeping force, under the auspices of the United Nations, to be deployed immediately to monitor and enforce the ceasefire. The expiration of UNIFIL's mandate at the end of

the month was, in view of events, a timely opportunity to extend and reconfigure its mandate to respond to the complex situation, including providing security for the channelling of humanitarian assistance. Another important aspect of the package of solutions was the need for a reconstruction and rehabilitation programme for Lebanon and Palestine, which must form part of the peacebuilding process in the region.

He further reiterated his delegation's commitment to peace in the Middle East, and the creation of a viable and sovereign Palestinian State under the two-State solution, as provided for in the Road Map, as well as the Arab peace initiative of 2002. In that regard, it was important to ensure that the Lebanese Government extend its authority over all of its territories, exercise its full sovereignty over it and implement the 1949 armistice agreements. He called on the international community to take urgent steps to avert a wider humanitarian crisis and further bloodshed, while the path to peace was reopened as soon as possible. He appealed to the Council to deliver a unified and constructive resolution to immediately halt the atrocities and the cycle of violence in the region.

YAHYA MAHMASSANI, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, said the absence of a response by the Council to Israeli acts of aggression in Lebanon and Gaza, as well as its failure to act decisively, had led Israel to persist in its aggression. Israel seemed predetermined to destroy the infrastructure of Lebanon and Gaza. Despite the Secretary-General's efforts to find a solution to the conflict, Israel had rejected repeated appeals of the international community and continued to flagrantly flout international law, by deliberately targeting civilians, meting out its collective punishment, holding them under siege and denying humanitarian access. He called on the Security Council to adopt a resolution calling for a comprehensive and immediate ceasefire and a halt to all military actions. Israel's destruction of Lebanon would have great repercussions in the region, exacerbating extremism. Israel might have alternative objectives beyond what it had declared.

He said it was evident that the tragic situation was but a reflection of the collapse of the peace process and its mechanisms to find a solution to the situation. Against the backdrop of the current grave situation, the leaders of the Arab States had condemned Israel's acts and had decided to call on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities by calling on Israel to cease its military operations and urge all parties to respect international law. The situation constituted a grave danger to regional and international peace and security. In that regard, it was necessary to arrive at a comprehensive and permanent settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, given the fact that occupation was the root cause of the violence in the region. The League had decided to call on the Security Council to convene a high-level meeting to consider the Arab-Israeli dispute, given the failure of all other efforts to resume the peace process. The Middle East region stood at a historic crossroad today, making it incumbent on the Council to carry out its mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security.

ROBERT HILL ( Australia ) said his country recognized Israel's right to act in self-defence. He called on both sides to exercise restraint, to avoid civilian deaths, to avoid damage to civilian infrastructure and to refrain from acts that would escalate an already dangerous situation. The crisis had begun with the attacks on Israel by Hamas and Hizbollah, including the capture of Israeli soldiers and launching of rockets into Israel. Australia condemned those actions and called for the unconditional release of the hostages taken by Hamas and Hizbollah. He also called for an immediate end to the rocket attacks on Israel. Concerned with the humanitarian situation, his Government would provide 2 million Australian dollars through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). His Government was working to ensure the safe evacuation of some 25,000 Australians from Lebanon.

He said the priority must be to create conditions for a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire. That could only be achieved through the full implementation of Council resolutions 425, 426, 1559 and 1680, in particular those elements regarding disarming militias and the extension of the control of the Government over all Lebanese territory. A long-term solution to the Middle East conflict must involve acceptance of Israel's right to exist in peace and the need for the emergence of a Palestinian State. Those countries with influence over Hizbollah — Syria and Iran — should exercise that influence to prevent continuation of acts of violence. Any multilateral security/monitoring presence must have a robust mandate to enable it to guarantee both Lebanese sovereignty and Israel's security.

BAKI ILKIN ( Turkey ) said hostage-taking could not be condoned in any way and the right of self defence could not be denied. Israeli military personnel had to be released immediately. On the other hand, Israel could and should not resort to disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force and violence. The destruction of Lebanon, and that of the hopes of the Palestinians for a viable State, could not be allowed. What was taking place in the region went far beyond self-defence and would, in the long run, not serve the interests of Israel.

He said that, in order to stop civilian casualties and destruction of infrastructures, the first thing to be done was to achieve a ceasefire. At the same time, the three abducted soldiers should be handed over to Israel immediately. The elected Palestinian officials should be freed. He hoped that, at a later stage, women and children prisoners could also be released. The relevant parties should start immediately on the implementation of elements that could form the basis of a lasting ceasefire. Common sense and moderation must succeed in the Middle East.

All should agree that the root cause of what was happening was the continuation of the Middle East problem. Until, and unless, a just, equitable and lasting solution was found to the problem, there could be no permanent peace and security in the region. Unilateral moves, arrangements and the use of force were no substitutes for a comprehensive settlement. Turkey had always provided substantial assistance to the Palestinians and would continue to do so. It was also prepared to contribute to relief for the suffering of the Lebanese people. What was happening in the region, if not checked and stopped immediately, would go down in history as a most regrettable episode for all of entire humanity.

HAMID CHABAR ( Morocco ) said his country was very concerned at the serious situation in the Middle East and the developments in the last few days in both Lebanon and in the Gaza Strip. He condemned the use of excessive force that contravened all international conventions. The situation would only worsen, in view of Israel's determination to continue its aggression, using collective punishment that displaced numerous persons. The crisis was exacerbated by the growing difficulties for the Lebanese people in obtaining food and water. He called upon the international community to act promptly to bring emergency assistance to the victims.

He had noted with concern the incapacity of the Council to take the necessary measures to put an end to the Israeli aggression. He called on the Council to act according to its responsibilities under the Charter. He supported any initiative that could bring about an immediate ceasefire and the lifting of the blockade. His country also supported the demand that the Lebanese Government restore its authority over its entire territory. He also called for humanitarian corridors, and for enabling UNIFIL forces to move around, in order to bring humanitarian assistance. Regarding Palestine, he called for the liberation of all elected Palestinians and for an end to the violent campaign in the territory, as well as the withdrawal by the Israeli army from Gaza.

M. JAVAD ZARIF ( Iran ) said the international community was witnessing with horror the daily exacerbation of two cases of blatant and premeditated aggression and multiple war crimes perpetuated by the Israeli regime against the people of Palestine and Lebanon, under absurd and all too familiar pretexts, while the Council had been forced into inaction and appeasement by the patrons of the aggressor. Terrorism in the truest sense of the word was on display, as the aggressor gave short notice before beginning to bomb entire neighbourhoods and regions. Nine days of blanket and indiscriminate air, missile and artillery strikes against civilians and civilian infrastructure had gone on, while the Council had been prevented from even calling for a ceasefire. With bridges, roads, seaports and airports already hit, and a complete blockade imposed, terrorized civilians were left to wonder how to flee and where to seek refuge. With the increasing lack of food and medicine, attacks on humanitarian convoys and disrupted water and electricity supplies, a serious humanitarian crisis was in the making.

He said no stretching of international law and the Charter principles could logically sell such unbridled, disproportionate and indiscriminate barbarism and collective punishment against civilians, as self-defence. The aggression on Lebanon followed a similar one on the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian people continued to be subject to the same collective punishment by the same perpetrators. The latest United States veto in the Council had further emboldened the aggressors to widen their crimes with apparent impunity. Yet, if history was any guide, while the aggressor's war machine may be able to lay waste infrastructures, kill civilians and take their elected representatives hostage, it was impossible to intimidate the people of Palestine and Lebanon into submission. In fact, experience indicated that such onslaughts strengthened, not weakened, the resolve of the people to resist aggression, occupation and terror.

While the massive propaganda machine might try to reverse the truth and spread smokescreens to hide the "ugly face of aggression", millions of people who had turned out in the streets across the globe knew exactly where the blame should lie, which regimes rightly belonged to the axis of evil and terror, and who were the culprits and their supporters who had destabilized the region. The brutal collective punishment that the Lebanese and Palestinian people were now enduring was the Israeli "signature brand of aggression", which the peoples in the region had experienced time and again in the past several decades. The new round was more alarming, as it occurred at a sensitive time, when various Lebanese communities and parties were engaged in a national endeavour to reach a comprehensive understanding through an all-inclusive dialogue, an effort that the aggressors had aimed to defeat, too.

He said it was important to note that the Israeli onslaught was part of their design on Lebanon, exemplified by their repeated violations of Lebanese borders and airspace, holding onto the Shebaa farms and keeping Lebanese detainees. In fact, the blanket air strikes, artillery and missile attacks against targets across Lebanon after the border incident on 12 July were indicative of a pre-existing plan. Wide-range operations could not have been carried out without prior planning, as well as prior coordination with the supporting Power and the receipt of the necessary green light. The joint rejection of all calls for ceasefire was a further proof. The current position of the United States Government was not only the culmination, but also pushing to the extreme decades of unswerving support for Israeli aggressions against the Muslim and Arab people in the region, leading to, among other things, 31 vetoes.

It was regrettable that the Council had been rendered incapacitated to address the crisis, utterly failing to live up to its responsibility under the Charter, a failure that had been taken as a license to kill and wreak havoc across Gaza and Lebanon, he said. It would be a travesty of justice, if the Council, after over nine days of inaction, was forced to simply relaying the Israeli conditions and helping to impose them on the Lebanese and Palestinian people. An immediate and unconditional ceasefire and an end to the siege of Lebanon was what the peoples of the United Nations demanded, and what the Council should try to achieve. He supported a comprehensive solution to the crisis, including the release of the Lebanese and Palestinian detainees and holding the aggressors accountable for the lives perished and infrastructures devastated.

He said his Government categorically rejected the baseless allegations against Iran that had been repeated in the Council again today. Those allegations were part and parcel of an elaborate Zionist scheme to break resistance against aggression and invasion in the region, and deflect attention from the root cause of all tensions in the Middle East, namely the continued occupation of Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian territories and its fall-out, including the illegal detention of thousands of Arabs and the violation of their rights. The allegations emanated from the occupying regime and were relayed by Zionist quarters across the globe to overshadow its crimes. Iran supported the people and Governments of Palestine and Lebanon and was prepared to provide them with political and humanitarian assistance in helping them restore their legitimate right to territorial integrity and self-determination.

ROBLE OLHAYE ( [Djibouti](#)) agreed with the Secretary-General that what was most urgently required was the immediate cessation of hostility. Without that, relief for survivors, the wounded and the suffering could not be given. Also required was humanitarian assistance to those in need; even UNIFIL was itself without freedom of movement. Given the circumstances and dangers, it was reassuring that the Secretary-General had proclaimed that the international community was not going to desert the Lebanese people in their hour of need.

The Hizbollah abduction of Israeli soldiers had been both reckless and senseless, and must be condemned, he continued. In the highly tense climate of the Middle East, that act was tailor-made to provoke a response from Israel, which it had done. What had followed was, indeed, a war, whose response was so excessive, so destructive and so inhumane, as to bring in question the real motives of Israel. The war was on its tenth day and continued, causing untold loss and suffering on both sides. Any country's right to self-defence was enshrined in the Charter. Inherent in that right, however, was also the principle of responsibility of "justified response to aggression". Israel's unchallenged large-scale assault and systematic destruction of a sovereign nation that was a member of the United Nations could not be justified under any pretext of self-defence. The siege of Lebanon was illegal, unwarranted and reckless.

"Lebanon has suddenly become a large prison; a huge humanitarian crisis, with people crying in desperation -- where is the international community? Where is the Security Council?" he said. It had been dismaying to observe the "no-action" mode pursued by key players of the international community, many of whom had assumed the classic pose of the three monkeys who neither saw, heard, nor said any evil. In the long run, he agreed that there was an urgent need to arrange an international conference on the situation regarding Lebanon, to assemble a peacekeeping force capable of maintaining peace in the area and to rapidly put together a donor framework to secure funding for an urgent aid package for the rehabilitation, reconstruction and development of Lebanon. Sadly though, while the Security Council and key players maintained a resounding silence as the carnage continued, each passing hour made progress towards the realization of such goals much harder.

He added that, following the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier in Gaza by Palestinian fighters, Israel had resorted to a full-scale war of bombardment that had included the destruction of a power plant, depriving hundreds of thousands of civilians of electricity and water in the sweltering heat of summer. The blockade of Gaza, as well as the indiscriminate, disproportionate and collective punishment of Palestinians, continued. The Secretary-General's impassioned urging of Israel yesterday to reopen the closed crossing points must be heeded. Until Israel accepted the right of the Palestinians and refrained from unilateral acts that prejudiced final status issues, and until it negotiated in good faith, there would be no end to the vicious cycle of violence. Peace and security in the Middle East could never be driven by either sheer power, or misplaced pride. Rather, it required pragmatism and realism. Security for all came not through unending conflict and warfare, but through the desire for genuine peace that recognized the existence and rights of all the peoples in the region.

ROSEMARY BANKS ( [New Zealand](#)) condemned the loss of innocent civilian lives and the destruction of vital civilian infrastructure. She strongly urged all sides to pull back from the violence, observe international law and allow international facilitators and mediators a chance to put a peace process together. She condemned the killing and detention of Israeli soldiers by the military wing of Hamas and by Hizbollah. The soldiers must be released immediately, unharmed, and Hizbollah must stop its rocket attacks on Israel. States with influence over Hamas and Hizbollah must ask for restraint in the interests of the wider international community. The message to them must be that confrontation and violence were destroying the prospects for a peace settlement in the Middle East.

At the same time, she said Israel had not reacted with due proportionality or caution. Its attacks on the Occupied Palestinian Territory and on Lebanon, targeting militants and infrastructure, had also destroyed housing and caused hundreds of casualties, most of them civilians. It was causing further suffering through the denial of the basic necessities of life and the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. Israel must heed the many calls for restraint and allow full and immediate access to relief efforts. It must also release officials of the Palestinian Authority, whom it had detained.

She said the Secretary-General was to be commended for his efforts to bring about an immediate ceasefire and begin the negotiating process. He would need the full and active support of the Security Council, and she urged the Council to give his proposals urgent and positive consideration. There had been an ongoing failure to address and resolve the root causes of the conflict in the Middle East. The extremist message resonated where injustice, deprivation, fear and hopelessness reigned. A ceasefire in Lebanon and resolution of the immediate causes of the conflict must be followed by negotiations for a comprehensive peace in the region, if such crises were to be avoided in future.

NIRUPAM SEN ( [India](#)) said his delegation was seriously concerned about the escalating tension in West Asia, as a result of developments in the Gaza Strip and on the Israel-Lebanese border, which had the potential to inflame the region and widen the conflict. India had condemned the abduction of two Israeli soldiers on 12 July and called for their immediate release. His delegation had equally strongly condemned the excessive and disproportionate military retaliation by Israel, which had targeted civilian infrastructure, resulting in the killing and suffering of innocent civilians. At least one Indian national had been killed and several injured in the bombings that are taking place in Lebanon. There could be no justification for the targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure, which merited condemnation and was contrary to international law. He called upon all parties concerned to eschew violence, deescalate the situation and return to the path of negotiations. Lasting peace and security in the region could be achieved only through peaceful dialogue, not the use of force.

The international community could no longer remain silent in the face of the severe escalation in the conflict, he said. A humanitarian crisis was looming and a spill-over of the conflict beyond the region was a distinct possibility. The Secretary-General's plan offered a firm basis for discussion in the Council on how the issue had to be addressed. An immediate and comprehensive ceasefire would be predicated on the return of the captured Israeli soldiers, extension of authority of the Government of Lebanon over all of its territory and immediate measures to provide relief and rehabilitation to the people of Lebanon. As a major troop contributor to UNIFIL and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), India was concerned about the conditions under which United Nations peacekeepers were required to perform their duties. Unilateral restrictions on UNIFIL had to be removed and the United Nations mandate and the sanctity of its personnel respected.

There was equal concern about the situation in the Gaza Strip, he said. On 12 June, India had condemned the killing of innocent civilians by the Israeli Defence Forces in an unprovoked attack on 9 June. India had also condemned the incident at the Kerem Shalom crossing near Gaza on 25 June, which had provoked the threat of massive retaliatory measures by Israel. He was concerned at the real danger that the situation could escalate into large-scale military conflict. The release of the captured Israeli soldier would contribute to defusing the growing tension. India condemned all acts of violence, provocative statements, threats and intimidation. India was seriously concerned at the hardships and sufferings of the Palestinian people as a result of the evolving situation in Gaza and the West Bank, a situation that had been exacerbated by Israel's destruction of Palestinian infrastructure.

He said the international community needed to call for an immediate halt to hostilities on all sides, counsel utmost restraint, especially in the excessive use of force, and urge a return to dialogue. He also reiterated India's call for all parties to renounce violence and resolve their differences through peaceful means. Israel must halt its offensive, withdraw its forces from their positions inside Gaza and release all political figures and other Palestinians. At the same time, the Palestinian leadership should make every effort to facilitate the release of the Israeli soldier and prevent any escalation of the conflict through rocket attacks against Israel and other extremist actions by militants. He supported the Secretary-General's call for an immediate cessation of indiscriminate and disproportionate violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and a reopening of the closed crossing points. It was unfortunate that President Abbas had been held incommunicado in Gaza for the last three weeks and had not been allowed to meet anyone. He urged Palestine and Israel to abstain from unilateral action that could prejudice final status negotiations. A negotiated outcome was the only way to ensure long-term peace, security and stability.

HERALDO MUÑOZ ( [Chile](#)) said his Government condemned the disproportionate measures of the Israeli forces that had caused hundreds of civilian deaths in Lebanon and the destruction of infrastructures in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. He also condemned the attacks carried by Hizbollah militias, including rocket attacks. The soldiers should be freed, as should the Palestinian officials still under arrest. Those facts had aggravated a spiral of violence in the region. He called on all parties to immediately stop armed action. The Israeli army should be withdrawn and Hamas must stop their attacks. He called on the Government of Lebanon to exert its control over all of its territory, with the help of the international community, if it so wished. He supported a practical package of measures proposed by the Secretary-General.

With regard to the severe humanitarian crisis affecting the Palestinian and Lebanese people, his Government had supported the resolution in the Human Rights Council that had decided to send a mission to investigate the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Chile would soon send medicines and other assistance to the thousands of civilians affected by the bombings in Lebanon. It had sent an airplane to Damascus to repatriate Chilean and Latin American citizens trapped there. He reiterated the call to return to dialogue, as history had shown that military solutions always failed.

FRANCISCO JAVIER ARIAS CÁRDENAS ( Venezuela ) condemned the Israeli military incursions into the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Lebanese territory and the violation of Syrian airspace. What had happened in the last few days was extremely severe. Deeds had been carried out that indiscriminately affected the peoples of Lebanon and Palestine. A military campaign had been carried out, with bridges and power stations destroyed. Lebanon had been blocked by land, sea and air. One third of the deaths had been children. United Nations staff had not been spared and had been prevented from fulfilling their role in assisting those affected. He condemned the arrest of parliamentarians and members of the Palestinian Authority, in flagrant violation of international law. Maintaining international peace and security depended on the premise that relations between States should be governed by the strict adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter.

The Security Council could not become an accomplice to destruction and death, he said. An obstructionist policy had existed for a long time with regard to a balanced consensus action to solve the situation in the Middle East. Those double standards in no way contributed to a fair solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Council should fulfil the role incumbent on it. The use of the veto could be understood as complicity with death and destruction in the Middle East. A new outrage was being witnessed at the United Nations. Was it possible to end death and destruction? In view of the Council's failure to act, the Union for Peace resolution of 1950 should be evoked to hold an emergency session in the General Assembly and adopt a resolution that would not be vetoed. He reiterated Venezuela's solidarity with the innocent victims, and called on Member States to carry out a joint effort that would lead to the immediate cessation of hostilities.

ILEANA NUNEZ MORDOCHE ( Cuba ) supported the position of the Non-Aligned Movement and reaffirmed her country's full solidarity with the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples. Once more, Member States were gathered to discuss issues related to the continued and flagrant violations of international peace and security, in the face of which this United Nations organ -- supposedly established to prevent acts of aggression -- had turned a blind eye. Cuba condemned the current inhumane and criminal aggression that deliberately intended to put an economic and military stranglehold upon the Palestinian people's resistance. The Security Council kept shamefully silent, and it did not seem to be in a position to take strong action against the aggressor. With its inability to act, the Council was being complicit with the impunity of that barbarism.

Israel continued to act with impunity under the permanent cover of the United States veto in the Council, she continued. Just a few days ago, that country had wielded its veto power for the thirtieth time regarding draft resolutions of the Council related to Palestinian Occupied Territory. Once again, the hegemonic super-Power utterly paralyzed the Council and disregarded the will of the overwhelming majority of the international community.

Turning to the situation in Lebanon, she said that one front of aggression did not seem enough for the Zionist State. Cuba had denounced on countless occasions Israeli violations of all norms of international law by militarily attacking a sovereign country under the spurious pretext of "protecting its security" with the economic and military support and blatant complicity of the United States. Once more, the Council's passivity with issues that disturbed Washington and its allies could lead to a new humanitarian crisis of grave consequences, affecting the whole region. On 16 July, the Foreign Ministry of Cuba had issued a statement expressing its strongest condemnation of Israel's savage military aggression against Lebanon, and urging the international community and peace-loving forces to mobilize and demand that Israel immediately put an end to such barbaric acts, return the territories occupied in Lebanon and respect the most basic norms of international law.

She added that, the only valid conclusion to be drawn from today's meeting would be the adoption of actions to put a stop to genocide and aggression, and condemn the perpetrator of genocide and aggression. The Council must act without delay and assume the responsibilities bestowed upon it by the Charter.

YASIR A.ABDELSALAM ( Sudan ) said a real killing machine had escaped its confinement, and was now spilling the blood of innocent women and children. The Israeli killing machine had destroyed numerous houses and infrastructures in the Gaza Strip and in Lebanon. He was surprised at the suspicious silence about the fact that all that killing and destruction had been done under the excuse of self-defence.

He said his country strongly condemned the systematic State terrorism of Israel. The Council had not condemned the killing of civilians and the indiscriminate use of force. Last week, the Council had failed to pass a resolution that would have protected the Palestinian people. He called for decisive measures to halt the Israeli war against Lebanon. There must be a total and immediate ceasefire, a release of all prisoners, provision of urgent humanitarian assistance and a lifting of the blockade. Israel must pay compensation for the damages it had caused. The crime of genocide perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinians must be stopped immediately.

JOHN MCNEE ( Canada ) said the Council was meeting as violence raged in the Middle East, and it was the civilians on all sides who paid the heaviest price. Eight Canadians visiting relatives had been killed in southern Lebanon. The dynamics in the region must change. Sovereign, democratic countries like Lebanon could not be held hostage by terrorists. The independent acts of terrorist organizations, encouraged by countries supporting them, could quickly embroil neighbouring countries into war. The crisis in Lebanon had escalated at an alarming pace and the greatest toll had been exacted upon innocent civilians in Israel and Lebanon. Hizbollah had violated Israel's sovereignty, unprovoked. Israel's response to the abduction and killing of its soldiers was an exercise of its right to self-defence.

It was now clear, he said, that Hizbollah's objectives went far beyond the abduction of Israeli soldiers, in order to barter for the release of prisoners in Israeli jails. It was also obvious that the abduction was only the prelude to a major offensive aimed at inflicting as much pain and suffering as possible, which was evident in Hizbollah's indiscriminate launching of hundreds of rockets into urban areas deep into Israel, with devastating consequences, including the deaths of innocent civilians, and intended to sabotage internal Lebanese democratic political dialogue, whose objectives included fulfilling resolution 1559. It was intended also to serve the interests of Hizbollah's backers in Damascus and Tehran. The Council had passed resolution 1559 in an earnest effort to disarm the terrorist organization Hizbollah. Since that time, Hizbollah had been allowed to operate with impunity in south Lebanon. The heaviest costs in that regard continued to be borne by the Lebanese people. While the Lebanese Government had been faced with a formidable challenge, Syria and Iran — Governments that aided and abetted Hizbollah with financial and military support — must be held accountable.

The key to ending the senseless violence laid with Hizbollah, he said. It must stop the rocket attacks and release the abducted soldiers. He reaffirmed the G-8's call for the Council to examine the possibility of deploying an international security/monitoring presence in Lebanon. That should be accompanied by the development of a political framework to create conditions for stability and a lasting peace. Canada also endorsed the G-8's appeal to the Council to develop a plan for the full implementation of resolution 1559.

The situation in Gaza was also deeply troubling, he said. Canada was committed to supporting President Abbas and called on the Palestinian Authority to take immediate steps to bring peace and stability to its people. The resolution to the crisis began with ceasing the launching of Qassam rockets into Israeli towns, and immediately and unconditionally returning the young Israeli corporal to his family in Israel. At the same time, Canada urged Israel to exercise utmost restraint in its operations in Gaza and to respect international humanitarian law. He endorsed the Quartet's conditions for the Palestinian Authority. An end to violence included recognizing Israel as a legitimate neighbour and its right to lasting security. It also included the right of Palestinians to their own State, independent and capable of achieving the aspirations of their people. It was the responsibility of all parties to work toward the cessation of violence.

JORGE SKINNER KLEE ( Guatemala ) expressed concern at the deepening crisis in the Middle East. He deplored the tragic death of innocent civilians in the last few days and called on all parties to exercise the utmost moderation. He stressed the importance of diplomatic and political measures and urged all parties to carry out all possible efforts to solve the crisis through peaceful means. He also urged the parties to respect international law and reminded them of their right to protect civilian life. He condemned the arrest by Israel of democratically elected Palestinian officials. At the same time, he condemned the kidnapping by Palestinian militants of an Israeli soldier. It was necessary for the Government of the Palestinian Authority to adopt measures to improve the security situation and avoid terrorist attacks against Israel, including the launching of rockets into its territory.

Israel had the right to live in peace within secure borders, as does Palestine, he said. Guatemala deplored and condemned the confrontations provoked by Hizbollah since 12 July and the launching of rockets. He urged all parties to stop the escalation of the current situation, which would lead to a new and dangerous deterioration in the regional situation. He urged Lebanon's Government to spare no effort to ensure that the two Israeli soldiers be freed as soon as possible. At the same time, he urged Israel to withdraw from Lebanese territory and respect the Blue Line. While Israel had every right to act in self-defence, it should act in moderation and ensure that its actions were reasonable.

He also demanded that Hizbollah stop launching rockets into Israeli territory. He called for an immediate ceasefire and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 425, 1559 and others. Guatemala welcomed the initiatives of the Secretary-General to send a high-level mission to reduce tension and urged respect for international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, as well as the deployment of a multinational force in the area. The Security Council had the responsibility to avoid greater polarization among all parties and contribute to finding alternatives to an escalation in the violence. The Council could not abdicate its responsibility for protecting civilians and maintaining international peace and security.



PAUL BADJI ( [Senegal](#) ), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, said that, while the world's attention was mostly focused on the grave situation in Lebanon, Israel's military activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory were continuing unabated. Since Israel's escalation of its operations in the Gaza Strip, after the capture of an Israeli soldier on 25 June, more than 100 Palestinians had been killed, including many civilians. Hundreds more had been wounded. The number of casualties was rising in the West Bank. The military activities of the occupying Power were deliberately causing a major humanitarian crisis among the innocent civilian population. The only power plant in the Gaza Strip had been destroyed by Israel, leaving more than 1 million people without electricity. International relief efforts were constantly hampered, if not completely prevented, because of the almost total closure of the Gaza borders.

The Palestinian Rights Committee condemned the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of Israel's military might against the Palestinian population, he continued. Deliberate attacks by Israeli forces against civilian property and infrastructure in the Gaza Strip violated international humanitarian law. Continued closures of the crossing points to the Strip constituted collective punishment of an entire innocent population. Israel needed to be reminded that, as an occupying Power, it was bound under international law to protect and safeguard the basic human rights of the Palestinian population.

The Committee had also called for a cessation of rocket attacks on Israel and other violent actions by Palestinian armed groups that put civilians in serious danger and destabilized the already fragile situation. It would also like to voice its frustration about the inability of the international community to deescalate the alarming situation in Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It deplored that the Council had not been in a position to adopt a tabled resolution. The Council should live up to its responsibility and help end the current escalation, which was causing bloodshed and misery in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

He added that the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian Territory remained the root cause of the conflict, which could have no final solution without the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, defined by the General Assembly as the right to self-determination without external interference, the right to national independence and sovereignty, and the right of Palestinians to return to their homes and property.

MOHAMMED AL-OTAIBA ( [United Arab Emirates](#) ) said Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory were facing barbarous and deliberate destruction at the hand of Israel. Israeli actions were in defiance of international law and human rights. They also constituted a war crime that was punishable under international law. Those acts could in no way be justified. He condemned military solutions, as they did not contribute to solving the problems of the people. He strongly condemned the continued Israeli action against the people of Lebanon and in the Gaza Strip. The Council's inaction only incited Israel to continue its barbarous actions.

He encouraged the Council to put pressure on Israel to end its aggression, and called on the United Nations to mobilize humanitarian support of the international community to alleviate the suffering of the Lebanese and Palestinian people. In Lebanon, there should be an immediate and unconditional ceasefire under the auspices of the United Nations. He called for the complete implementation of resolution 1559, including withdrawal by Israel from the Shebaa Farms. There should be assistance to the Government of Lebanon to extend its authority over the whole of its territory.

He further called on Israel to immediately end all military operations in the Gaza Strip, to free thousands of detainees and to stop settlement activities and the construction of the separation wall. He also called upon Israel to compensate all victims of its actions in the region.

SIVU MAQUNGO ( [South Africa](#) ) said his Government was deeply concerned at the escalation of the conflict in Lebanon, northern Israel and the Gaza Strip, which had resulted in the loss of many lives and the destruction of critical infrastructure. The use of air strikes by Israel in heavily populated areas, to carry out extrajudicial killings, was against international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions. South Africa could not accept the principle of "collective punishment". His delegation did not believe that an entire nation could be attacked because of tensions with Hizbollah. His Government called on the Israeli Government to refrain from that type of action and, as a major military Power in the region, to act with restraint to avoid further civilian casualties and the destruction of vital infrastructure.

He called on the Palestinians and Hizbollah to release the Israeli prisoners and call for an end to the launching of rockets into Israel. Failure to do so had resulted in the Israeli military offensive, causing massive death and destruction. He welcomed the package of elements put forward by the Secretary-General. Only through a cessation of hostilities would there be an opportunity to end the crisis. He urged the Council to act decisively and assume its Charter-granted responsibility of contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security by working to urgently resolve the crisis.

AIZAZ AHMAD CHAUDHRY ( [Pakistan](#) ) said his President had called for an immediate ceasefire and cessation of hostilities by all parties to the conflict. It was the fundamental responsibility of the Council, as well as of the major Powers and regional actors, to ensure that violence was halted, hostilities were ceased and peace

was established. The current situation was alarming, as the number of deaths and injured and displaced was rising by the hour. The Government of Lebanon was facing a critical situation. The present situation was a direct result of actions against the widely recognized principle that, in the Middle East, there was no military solution to the conflict. The warring parties must, therefore, cease hostilities and allow diplomacy and peace a chance.

He called upon the Government of Israel and on Hizbollah to halt all military action forthwith. He urged the Council to take an objective view of the situation, to establish a ceasefire and to ensure its scrupulous monitoring and respect by all parties concerned. The international community should mobilize resources to provide humanitarian relief to the hundreds of thousands displaced and traumatized people. Work towards peace and stability in the region should include ensuring that relevant Council resolutions and bilateral and multilateral agreements were implemented. The Council, the major Powers and the Quartet must act immediately and resolutely to stop the attacks and violence, and to put the peace process back on track. "We should not allow the violence to push the region back to the spiral of violence. The Security Council's urgent intercession in this context is imperative."

NGUYEN DUY CHIEN ( Viet Nam) said his country was deeply concerned with the escalated violence in the Middle East and over the safety of UNIFIL personnel. It was gravely worried about the dire humanitarian situation of the Lebanese people and the possible humanitarian catastrophe that was looming over the Middle East. It was a serious matter that United Nations agencies and their humanitarian partners were unable to reach southern Lebanon to deliver humanitarian assistance. Civilians, particularly children, must be protected.

He said his country condemned all acts of terror and violence, and all attacks against civilians and their property. It also condemned the destruction of the infrastructure and the abduction and detention of Government officials and other individuals. It demanded their immediate and unconditional release. All air, sea and land blockades imposed on Lebanon should be lifted, so that humanitarian activities could take place. Viet Nam called on the parties concerned to stop the indiscriminate and excessive use of force and to take practical actions to save the Middle East peace process, create favourable conditions for stabilizing the situation and to resolve the dispute through negotiations. He called on the Council to take prompt actions, in order to achieve an immediate cessation of hostilities.

ENRIQUE BERRUGA ( Mexico) once again condemned the provocation by irregular forces that had precipitated the crisis, and the disproportionate use of force that had brought about casualties and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. The actions of Hizbollah had made a whole nation hostage. The most urgent thing was to move from the stage of recrimination to that of action. Yesterday, the Secretary-General had presented the elements for a draft resolution. The immediate actions needed were evident, including the creation of humanitarian corridors and the freeing of Israeli hostages. That could not be solved with a simple ceasefire. Following Israel's unilateral withdrawal in 2000, the situation had not been stabilized along the Blue Line. The efficacy of UNIFIL had also been questioned.

He said a fair and lasting solution meant guaranteeing the full sovereignty of Lebanon's Government and Lebanon's legitimate forces along the Blue Line, as demanded by resolution 1559. The Lebanese Government, however, had not had the necessary measures to implement it. An international force should have a broad mandate. He would support the Secretary-General's initiative to implement resolution 1680, regarding a definite drawing of international borders between Lebanon and its neighbours, including the matter of the Shebaa farms. The international community should then monitor compliance with resolution 1559, with regard to the disarmament of irregular forces in Lebanon. The United Nations should have a calendar for the disarming of those forces. Without the disarming of irregular forces, there could be no stability. Resolution 1559 was the best formula for guaranteeing a stable and prosperous Lebanon. Mexico also expressed deep concern at the serious humanitarian situation of the population in the Gaza Strip, and urgently appealed to implement the measures posed yesterday by the Secretary-General.

\* \* \* \* \*

---

For information media • not an official record