



Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, during the United Nations Security Council Emergency Meeting on “the Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question” (18 October 2023)

Mr. President,

Pakistan commends China, Russian Federation and the UAE for convening this important emergency meeting on the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

2. We thank the special Coordinator for Middle East and USG OCHA for their briefings.

3. Today is the eleventh day of relentless, catastrophic Israeli attacks on Gaza. All of Gaza is under military siege, and electricity, water, and all humanitarian aid channels have been cut off. The entire populations of Gaza – women, children, and elderly – are being collectively punished by the indiscriminate Israeli attacks.

4. Pakistan strongly condemns Israeli air strikes and military incursions into Gaza, the killing of civilians, and the large-scale displacement of an already occupied and battered people.

5. The laws of war and the international humanitarian law, especially the Geneva Conventions must be strictly observed.

6. Pakistan strongly and unequivocally condemns Israel's cowardly and criminal attack on the Al-Ahley hospital yesterday, killing hundreds, mostly sick and wounded Palestinian children, women and men.

7. This willful atrocity, an attack on a hospital, which enjoys explicit protection under international law, is clearly a war crime and a crime against humanity. Those responsible for this crime must be held accountable through a full international inquiry and accountability process on this incident and other crimes committed in this conflict.

Mr. President,

8. Pakistan supports an immediate ceasefire. We regret that the Security Council was unable to issue a call for a ceasefire, due to the opposition and insufficient support for the resolution proposed by the

Russian Federation a day before, and for the Russian amendments to the Brazilian resolution calling for a ceasefire this morning.

9. Although the Brazilian resolution needed considerable improvement in our view, we were surprised at the Council's inability to adopt the Brazilian resolution due to the veto cast by a permanent member. A heavy responsibility rests on those who have contributed to the prolongation of consistent bombing of Gaza's citizens that is taking place.

Mr. President,

10. Consistent with decisions taken last year regarding the use of the veto, we expect that the General Assembly will address this conflict.

11. Despite the paralysis in the Security Council today, we hope that the General Assembly and the UN Secretary-General and the UN agencies will be able to halt the conflict, secure the opening of humanitarian corridors to ensure food, water and medicines, fuel and other essential supplies to the Palestinians in Gaza and prevent the displacement of the Palestinian population of Gaza.

12. The OIC Executive Committee of Foreign Ministers met today and has proposed, among other things, the dispatch of an international protection force to protect innocent lives from the ongoing attacks by the occupation forces and extremist colonialist settlers. The UN should give urgent consideration to this proposal.

Mr. President,

13. Let us not forget that the root cause of this latest violence is the prolonged and illegal occupation of Palestine and the usurpation of the lands and properties of Palestinians and the accompanying oppression and massive violations of human rights committed with impunity by Israel.

14. The illegality of Israel's occupation has been reaffirmed by the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ.

15. Any attempt to create a false equivalence between Israel, the aggressor, and the Palestinians, the victims, is untenable – legally, morally and political.

16. Let us also recall that the struggle of peoples under foreign and alien occupation for self-determination and national liberation is legitimate under international law and they have the right to use all possible means in this struggle to achieve their freedom. It is the suppression of this struggle, which is illegal. Under the Charter, States have the right of self-defense against attacks on their sovereignty and territorial integrity. Yet, a State which is in forcible occupation of a foreign territory, cannot invoke the “right to self-defense” against those whose territory it has illegally occupied.

Mr. President,

17. The final solution to the protracted conflict that has claimed so many lives and continues to jeopardize the stability of the entire region, lies in the creation of a secure, viable, contiguous, and sovereign state of Palestine on the basis of the pre-June 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

Thank you.