



**Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram Permanent
Representative of Pakistan to the UN during the Ministerial-level
Debate of the UNSC on the “Situation in the Middle East,
including the Palestinian Question”
(23 January 2024)**

Madam President,

Pakistan congratulates France and you, Madam President, for a successful Presidency of the Council this month, and for convening this important debate on the dire situation in Palestine and the Middle East.

2. We welcome the high level participation in this debate. And, we thank the UN Secretary General for his substantive briefing and eloquent appeal for peace this morning.

3. Over the past three months, the world has witnessed the most brutal slaughter of civilians of the twenty-first Century. Over 25,000 civilians, mostly children and women, have been killed by the Israeli onslaught in Gaza. Over 2 million have been displaced. And, humanitarian help has been deliberately impeded by the occupying Israeli army.

4. This brutal and indiscriminate killing of innocents, and the suffering imposed on an entire population, amounts to genocide, as asserted in the case filed by South Africa in the ICJ. Every tenet of international humanitarian law has been violated by the Israeli occupation.

5. It is sad that, despite the calls by the General Assembly in two resolutions, despite the near unanimous votes in this Security Council, the international community has failed to stop this genocide taking place in front of our eyes.

6. As we feared, violence and war has spread to adjacent areas of Palestine – to the Israel-Lebanon border, to Syria, Iraq and Yemen. Unless the Israeli war machine is stopped, there is every likelihood of further escalation in which many nations may be engulfed.

7. A heavy responsibility rests on the Security Council for being failed to prevent the continuation of Israel's war, and its atrocities against the Palestinian people in Gaza, and the accompanying brutalities in the West Bank.

8. We welcome the diplomatic efforts deployed to revive the prospects for a two-State solution. It is the only viable option for realizing a sustainable peace between the Israel and the Palestinians, and between Israel and the Arab and Islamic world.

9. Unfortunately, despite world opinion, despite the advice of its closest allies, and of many of its own people, the extremist Israeli leadership remains adamant in continuing this brutal war and rejecting the prospect of a Palestinian State and the two-State solution. This will consign the Middle East to perpetual conflict.

10. It is now time for the Security Council, for the entire membership of the United Nations, to consider measures by which to reverse this wanton rejection of peace. We hope the Council will be able, finally, to adopt a resolution demanding a complete cessation of hostilities, full access to humanitarian assistance for the besieged population of Gaza, and international protection for the Palestinian people. This revived peace process should be conducted within the framework of the Security Council, with the involvement of all relevant States and stakeholders.

11. If the Israeli leadership persists in refusing peace, the Security Council, the General Assembly, and indeed all UN Member States, must take steps to hold it accountable.

12. There are numerous precedents of measures that can be taken to persuade compliance with decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

13. In order to ensure the inevitability of the two-State solution, it is also time to admit Palestine as a full member of the United Nations.

14. Beyond the eloquent words heard in the Council's debate today, we look for concrete steps to halt the slaughter of innocents and bring peace to Palestine, to Israel and the Middle East.

I thank you.