



Statement

by

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to the United Nations

at the  
Security Council  
Open Debate

“The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”.

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Mr. President,

I would like to start by congratulating Brazil for a successful presidency of the Security Council and for holding this meeting.

The Middle East saw two important developments in the last month: The Jeddah Security and Development summit common positions especially on the Palestinian issue; and the visit of the president of the United States and his reaffirmation of the long held American position on the Arab-Israeli conflict. These two developments showed that the Palestinian issue is still central to any peace efforts in the region.

In the meantime, the situation in the Palestinian territories continued to be mired in tension reminding us that this conflict is still without a resolution. Daily Palestinian casualties remained a grim reality informing everybody that ignoring the Palestinian's plight will not make this conflict go away. It also proved that the much promised peace is still a pipe dream, while the peace process remains blocked rendering the Palestinian people more hopeless and without a political horizon.

The Jeddah summit in Saudi Arabia emphasized the need to reach a just solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the two state solution and the Arab Peace Initiative. It also called for stopping all unilateral measures that undermine the two state solution. The summit also reaffirmed the historical status quo of Jerusalem with the Hashmite guardianship over the holy sites in Al quds.

The visit of American President Joe Biden also brought a much needed change and rebalancing of the US position by going back to the traditional American policy toward the conflict.

President Biden reaffirmed the United States commitment to a "two state solution on the 1967 lines with land swaps mutually agreed on by the Israelis and the Palestinians".

The President highlighted the importance of direct negotiations leading to (Quote) an independent, sovereign, viable and contiguous Palestinian state alongside the state of Israel", allowing the two peoples to live side by side in peace and security. He called for avoiding unilateral measures by both sides.

The President also spoke about the importance of the Palestinians living in dignity, and to enjoy the "same freedom and self-determination of their neighbors", and expressed the US's readiness to work with the Israelis and the Palestinians and regional stakeholders toward a political horizon".

These pronouncements inspired hope in a new American peace making effort. But the president told the Palestinians that the "ground is not ripe" for new attempts to reach peace.

The argument that the ground is not ripe for a peaceful settlement is as old as the peace process. This ripeness theory allows for unilateral measures and for facts on the ground to put an end to the Palestinian dream of a state of their own, and of living a life of dignity with self-determination and freedom.

The President also stopped short of reassuring the Palestinians on two important issues: Jerusalem and the settlements. On Jerusalem while he reiterated the previous American administration's US position recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, he stopped short of fulfilling his pledge to reopen the US consulate in Jerusalem, nor did he talk about East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state.

The president did not stake a strong position on the settlements, although a new settlement and a park were announced before his visit. Settlements remain the most thorny of the unilateral measures, and the Palestinians, the Arabs, and the international community consider them illegal and the main obstacle to peace.

To quote the UN Middle East envoy: (Quote) "Continued settlement expansion further entrenches the occupation, encroaches upon Palestinian land and natural resources, and hampers the free movement of the Palestinian population". The UN also considers the settlements unilateral and provocative actions, as they undermine the prospects of a viable and contiguous Palestinian state.

Mr. President,

The Key to peace in the region, as Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said it simply, is by ending the occupation.

Mr. President,

Prime Minister Najib Mikati and his government are upholding their role as a care taker government and continue positively their work on the reform steps that the Prime Minister's cabinet started and needed to follow up with the international community especially the IMF. The Prime Minister was asked to form a new government during this trying time for the country, and he is continuing his efforts to do that. This government will also play the important role of making sure that the presidential elections take place on time, and in a safe and good atmosphere this fall.

On peace and security the situation in South Lebanon is calm but fragile. Lebanon is committed to the principles of the United Nations enshrined in its charter, foremost among them the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Lebanon is committed to a just and comprehensive peace for the conflict in the region, based on international legality and all the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In this regard Lebanon reiterates its commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1701 in its entirety, and calls on the other party to the conflict, Israel, to do the same. The daily Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty add to the tension in the region and must stop.

Lebanon is proceeding with the negotiations, and committed to finding a peaceful solution to its maritime border, on the basis of guaranteeing its national rights to its resources of gas and oil. The good offices of the United States, and the UN sponsorship and hosting of the talks have offered a peaceful path to resolving the border issue through these negotiations, at this difficult economic and financial time for Lebanon. This opportunity should not be missed.

Lebanon appeals to the international community to help it achieve this goal through reaching a peaceful, equitable and fair resolution of its maritime border dispute. Lebanon is not interested in conflict or in raising the tension and will continue its efforts with the help of its friends to reach a good conclusion for the negotiations.

Mr. President,

In a month's time, UNIFIL's mandate will be up for renewal. UNIFIL has been an indispensable force for stability in South Lebanon in partnership with the Lebanese army. We support the important role that UNIFIL plays in peace and security in the South, and we hope that its mandate will be renewed without any change. We also hope that this council will extend UNIFIL's support for the Lebanese army especially providing the LAF with provisions at this difficult time in Lebanon.

We count on your support and the support of the esteemed members of this Council.

I Thank you.