



MALAYSIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS



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**PRESS STATEMENT
ON THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL (UNSC)
ARRIA-FORMULA MEETING ON GAZA**

NEW YORK, 20 JULY 2015

The Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations (UN), H.E. Ambassador Dato' Ramlan Ibrahim, and the Permanent Representative of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the UN, H.E. Ambassador Dina Kawar co-chaired a United Nations Security Council Arria-formula meeting on Gaza entitled '*Reflections One Year later and Charting a New Course for Gaza*'.

2. An Arria-formula meeting is an informal and confidential gathering of the UN Security Council, whereby Security Council members would have the procedural flexibility to have a frank and private exchange of views with non-UN briefers. While exchanges were limited to Council members and the invited speakers during the meeting, all UN member states and accredited civil society partners and stakeholders were invited to observe the meeting's proceedings. Due to its confidential nature, media presence was restricted.

3. The meeting, held at the initiative of Malaysia, in close collaboration with the Israel-Palestine NGO Working Group at the UN and the Palestinian Observer Mission to the UN, was the first Arria-formula meeting on Palestine since March 1997. The meeting was well received and saw a good turnout, with over 100 participants from UN member states and NGOs.

4. The meeting sought to provide an opportunity for the Council to reflect on the 2014 Israeli offensive against Gaza, one year on, with a view to generating a new impetus for the Security Council to address the dire and unsustainable humanitarian situation in Gaza, especially in view of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations and the 65th anniversary of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) this year.

5. The meeting is also meant to set the stage for an expected initiative by France to introduce a draft resolution on the Israel-Palestine conflict to resume the Middle East Peace Process talks within a specified timeline. Malaysia is supportive of the French initiative and hopes that the meeting today could generate a new impetus for the

Security Council and the international community to urgently address the dire and unsustainable humanitarian situation and overcome the impasse in Gaza, as part of the broader need to resolve the Israel-Palestine crisis.

6. During the meeting, five speakers delivered their presentations to the Council, consisting of Mr. Vance Culbert, Country Director of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC); Ms. Tania Hary, Deputy Director of Gisha – Legal Center for Freedom of Movement (an Israeli NGO); and Ms. Sara Roy, Senior Research Scholar, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University. The meeting also heard pre-recorded video presentation from Ms. Wafaa Kafarna, Deputy Project Manager of NRC; and Mr. Ardi Imseis of Cambridge University.

7. In their presentations, the speakers highlighted the unsustainable situation on the ground in the Gaza Strip, the lack of progress on the reconstruction efforts, the impact of the blockade on the population, the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, as well as the need to ensure accountability and to ensure respect for international humanitarian and human rights law. They also urged the Council to shoulder its responsibility under the UN Charter and to muster the political will to resolve the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian crisis.

8. The speakers highlighted the fact that between 7 July and 26 August 2014 under the Israeli military offensive, a total of 2,251 Palestinians, including at least 1,462 civilians were killed, more than 550 were children. Close to 500,000 people were displaced at the height of the hostilities and approximately 100,000 remain internally displaced, their homes destroyed or severely damaged and uninhabitable. Public infrastructure, including schools and hospitals, and water and sanitation installations and networks, suffered heavy damage, affecting nearly every aspect of daily life.

9. The impact of the 2014 Israeli military offensive on Palestinian children has been devastating and has been highlighted by the UN Secretary-General as raising grave concerns about Israel's compliance with international humanitarian law, including the principles of distinction, precaution and proportionality, and international human rights law. During the 2014 military offensive, seven UNWRA school buildings used as emergency shelters were directly hit or struck by airstrikes and shelling, killing at least 42 persons, including 16 children and injuring 230 persons.

10. As a current member of the Security Council, it is Malaysia's desire to provide a platform for Council members to reflect and hear the voices of those who were on the ground during the 2014 Israeli military offensive and the views of experts on the subject matter, with a view to explore possible approaches in order to urgently address the increasingly unsustainable situation in Gaza.

11. There is a broad consensus by the international community that the situation in Gaza is absolutely unsustainable and that engagement by the international community and the Security Council in particular, will be vital to rectify this unjust and unsustainable situation. A majority of Council members expressed gratitude to Malaysia and Jordan for organizing the meeting, especially since the last UNSC Arria-formula meeting on Palestine was last held in March 1997. This speaks volumes about the political will of the Council to discuss and address the Palestinian question.

12. It has been Malaysia's long-standing foreign policy to fully support the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, especially the right to self-determination, for an independent State of Palestine with the realisation of two states, Palestine and Israel, living side by side, based on 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

13. In this regard, Malaysia will continue to play an active role as a UNSC member in contributing towards seriously addressing the underlying issues and root causes of the Israeli occupation and for the attainment of a just, lasting and peaceful solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.