



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

NEW YORK, 24 OCTOBER 2023

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

SECURITY COUNCIL – OPEN DEBATE

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. President,

I want to start my statement today by expressing our grave condolences to all the victims both in Israel and Palestine. The indelible scars left on all those affected must inspire us to redouble our efforts to seek peace. We thank you and your team for your tireless efforts to seek consensus on a Security Council resolution last week. We were disappointed that, in the end, the Council was unable to live up to its responsibility under the UN Charter, due to the use of the veto. The political organs of the United Nations must not be silent in this situation, which is a tragic crisis of our collective obligation to protect civilian populations.

Mr. President,

Liechtenstein condemns the terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians by Hamas, and the massive violations of international humanitarian law, in particular the targeting of civilians, mass killings,

abduction and hostage taking as well as the threat of killing of hostages. The firing of rockets from Gaza on civilian targets and the deliberate targeting of civilians are grave violations of international humanitarian law and amount to war crimes and possibly crimes against humanity.

Mr. President,

We affirm the right of Israel to defend itself in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law and its principles of discrimination and proportionality. A siege of Gaza, as declared by Israeli military leaders, amounts to an act of collective punishment that violates international humanitarian law. The large numbers of civilian casualties, a very large number of them children, that have resulted in Gaza to date are unacceptable.

Mr. President,

In the immediate future, we must set the protection of civilians as our highest priority. International humanitarian law, including the basic principles for the protection of civilians therein, must be safeguarded at all times, by all actors, and there must be accountability for their violation. We note in this respect the investigation of the International Criminal Court that has been active for almost a decade and look forward to the Court's concrete action.

Mr. President,

The United Nations, and this Council in particular, have a crucial responsibility in this situation. Preventing a further escalation of the Gaza and the wider region which already has led to

dangerous violence and heightened instability in the West Bank is one key aspect. But the peace and security that this Council is mandated to protect, in this most dire of situations, is fundamentally also people-centered. To this end, ensuring safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to the population in Gaza, in urgent need of assistance, is crucial, in conjunction with the full respect for all relevant provisions of international humanitarian law by the conflict parties. We commend Secretary-General Guterres for his leadership and hope that the Council will be able to live up to its responsibilities. In rising to the challenge, the Council approach must be grounded in our shared humanity and guided by international Law.

I thank you.