



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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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 thank you for this opportunity to discuss the situation in the Middle East. Escalations in different parts of the region as well as political paralysis in the Council make the participation of the entire membership in this discussion particularly meaningful and important.

Mr. President

The ongoing paralysis of the Security Council with respect to the situation in Syria is a reason for deep concern. No less than twelve vetoes have been cast on proposals before the Council to deal with the situation. Moreover, its rare decisions have been ineffective – such as the ceasefire mandated under resolution 2401, which continues to be blatantly disregarded by conflict parties. The conflict has turned from a civil war into a threat to the stability of the region and beyond. It continues to be characterized by massive violations of international

humanitarian law, including the use of chemical weapons, and large-scale displacement. Both the briefing we heard yesterday and the Brussels conference have made it clear just how far we are from a political solution to the conflict.

Mr. President

Accountability must be an integral part of any peace process for Syria – as is evidenced by the situation on the ground and called for consistently by Syrian civil society groups. We continue to strongly support the Syria Accountability Mechanism (IIIM), whose mandate encompasses crimes committed by all parties and of course the competence to investigate the use of chemical weapons – which is under all circumstances a war crime. The IIIM will soon be fully operational and is already in a position to receive information and evidence. We call on all States to extend this type of cooperation to the IIIM. We reiterate our view that this Council should refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court – as called for by the Secretary-General and supported at the Brussels conference.

Mr. President,

The peace process in the Middle East, already stalled for a considerable time, is now further jeopardized by recent developments in Gaza. We are deeply concerned by the recent violence, in particular, the reports of excessive use of force and extrajudicial killings. We support the call by the Secretary-General for an independent and transparent investigation and echo the ICC Prosecutor's reminder that the situation in Palestine remains under preliminary examination. According to the principle of complementarity, the primary responsibility to investigate is with national judiciaries concerned – with a role for the Court to monitor such proceedings, which have to be conducted in conformity with relevant standards of international criminal law. We also follow closely discussions on possible action by the Human Rights Council. Liechtenstein continues to support a two-State solution within an international legal framework based on applicable international humanitarian law and relevant Security Council resolutions.

Mr. President,

The catastrophic humanitarian crisis and the systematic disregard for international humanitarian law in Yemen remain alarming. It is crucial that humanitarian aid has unimpeded, sustained and safe access, as over 20 million people urgently require help. We welcome the Council's Presidential Statement calling for increased access for humanitarian aid into Yemen through sea and air-ports. Nevertheless, we are concerned that hostilities on all sides continue and will lead to a further escalation of the situation. The Security Council must live up to its responsibility and protect civilians from the most serious crimes under international law, including the deliberate targeting of civilian population and infrastructure and preventing delivery of humanitarian aid. We support the new Special Envoy's initiatives to re-launch inclusive peace talks. Only sustainable peace can end the crisis in Yemen. The Council, in particular the nine members – out of 116 UN states in total – that have signed the ACT Code of Conduct on mass atrocity crimes, should use their procedural majority in the Council to address the situation in Yemen with the attention and the urgency it deserves.

Mr. President,

One of the few positive developments in the recent past with respect to the situation Middle East was the conclusion of the JCPOA, a highlight to multilateral diplomacy, and a testimony to the effectiveness of this Council also, which has endorsed this important agreement. We continue to support the JCPOA and hope that its terms will be honored by all the parties.

I thank you.