



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

NEW YORK, 29 OCTOBER 2024

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

SECURITY COUNCIL – OPEN DEBATE

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

STATEMENT BY MYRIAM OEHRI, COUNSELLOR, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

President,

The situation in the Middle East is dire. In this chamber we have spent many months now calling on the parties to cease escalation, protect civilians and respect international law – largely to no avail. The price is being paid in civilian life, in the shredding of international law, and increasingly, attempts to undermine the work of this organization.

President,

We have all seen the footage from Gaza. Civilians are being displaced over and over again, trying to survive in conditions unfit for humans, and being killed in unacceptable numbers. We must again emphasize central principles of international humanitarian law which apply universally: Distinction, proportionality, precaution. There is an indispensable and non-negotiable imperative to protect civilian life at all times. Attacks on civilians and on civilian objects are war crimes.

In this respect we continue to encourage the International Criminal Court to carry out its mandate, independently and with impartiality. We reiterate our strong support for the ICC, as

well as our full respect for its independence and its procedures.

President,

We also now see an increasing need to reiterate these principles with regard to the escalation between Israel and Hezbollah, including with regard to strikes on civilian areas in Lebanon and in Israel. In the West Bank, we note again that the continued building or normalization of settlements is in direct violation of Resolution 2334, and of its obligation to cease all new settlement activities as put forward by the International Court of Justice in its recent advisory opinion. These developments also exemplify the increasing and concerning erosion of the *jus ad bellum* framework in the region. The decision to begin a military operation – which necessarily bears the cost of civilian casualty – must be a last resort, and only to ensure the protection of civilian life. Attacks in reprisal, for example, are prohibited under international law.

President,

Liechtenstein deplores the adoption by the Israeli parliament of legislation prohibiting cooperation with UNRWA and aiming at drastically restricting its operations, including in East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. These laws are incompatible with Israel's obligations under international law, and set a dangerous precedent for the multilateral system as a whole. We reiterate that UNRWA facilities are protected under international law. UNRWA provides an indispensable lifeline for the protection of Palestinian civilians and its work must be safeguarded and protected. In this regard we welcome the important press statement issued by the Security Council today.

Similarly, Liechtenstein places on record our full support for the work of the Secretary-General, as a significant majority of the Membership, as well as the membership of this Council has done in recent days. Finally, Liechtenstein supports the work of UNIFIL and reaffirms their status as protected persons, attacks on whom may constitute war crimes. We urge a commitment by all parties to Resolution 1701 and acknowledge calls to strengthen UNIFIL's mandate in this regard.

President,

Our countries share a common perspective to foreground the protection of civilians and international law. Thank you for standing up for these values on the Council when they are under attack. Your principled engagement with like-minded States on the Council - in particular its elected Members - remains vital. The Members of this Council cannot bring back the dead nor heal the lifelong trauma of war. But it remains our duty to take every step to end the war, to hold those responsible accountable, and to strengthen the work of this organization in which we have placed our trust.

I thank you.