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Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this meeting and I also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing. I acknowledge the presence of Honorable Ministers and other high-level officials in this meeting, including the Special Representative of the President of the State of Palestine, His Excellency Mr. Ziad Abu Amr.

Mr. President,

This Council has had hundreds of meetings to discuss the Palestinian question since it was first seized of the matter in 1947. For Guyana, at its core, the Palestinian question is a question of justice. Thus far justice has been delayed, and therefore justice has been denied to the people of Palestine for more than seven decades. This injustice was born in violence and has continued to be manifested in further cycles of violence – with perhaps the worst manifestation beginning on 7 October 2023 and continuing as we meet here today. It has also been manifested in repression of a kind that has put a stranglehold on the Palestinian nation, and seriously imperiled its right to exist. The international community and this Council have consistently rejected these designs on the Palestinian people, reiterating their inalienable rights, including their right to live in freedom and dignity in a state of their own. Notwithstanding, the injustice continues, necessitating greater efforts by this Council and other United Nations bodies to bring about compliance with their decisions on the Palestinian question. This is the fundamental difficulty in addressing the injustice against the Palestinian people – non-compliance with legally and morally binding decisions and the lack of accountability for this non-compliance. The Council needs a new approach that would yield sustainable results.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

The latest cycle of violence against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip has created a crisis of catastrophic proportions. It may take generations for the consequences to be addressed. Homes, schools, hospitals, roads and other critical infrastructure have been destroyed, concomitantly depriving more than two million Palestinians of their right to be free from arbitrary interference of their homes, to education, to healthcare and to a dignified existence.

This war is also leaving a devastating human toll with nearly thirty-four thousand Palestinians killed and close to eighty thousand injured since October 7. The occupying power, Israel, has described this war as a war to destroy the capabilities of Hamas. In reality, however, it is a war that is destroying women and children at a disproportionate rate. They represent almost 70% of those killed. It is also a war that has created fatal levels of insecurity for civilians and humanitarian personnel, including UN personnel, with more humanitarian workers killed over the last six months than in any single conflict in a single year.

Mr. President, dear colleagues



Having considered all of the deprivations to which the population in the Gaza Strip has been subject to since 7 October, one can justifiably conclude that a deliberate strategy of collective punishment of the worst kind is being inflicted on the Palestinian people. This strategy involves indiscriminately wounding civilians while simultaneously shrinking their access to healthcare. It also involves a systematic decrease in the safe places to which they have access, cramming them into smaller and smaller spaces while simultaneously threatening to bomb those same spaces. This strategy has also incorporated starvation as a method of warfare evidenced by, inter alia, attacks on those attempting to meet the needs of starving Palestinians. Palestinians themselves have been fatally attacked while seeking sustenance. The results of this strategy have been malnutrition, famine, disease, and death. It must stop.

The occupying power has obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law with which it must strictly comply. In this context, Israel is obligated to implement the orders issued by the International Court of Justice on 26 January and 28 March and Guyana calls for full compliance.

Guyana reiterates its call for an immediate and sustained ceasefire in Gaza as demanded in resolution 2728. Without a ceasefire, humanitarian efforts in Gaza will not have the desired impact of alleviating the suffering.

We stress the importance of additional routes into Gaza to scale up humanitarian relief and call on Israel to immediately implement its decision in this regard without impediments.

Guyana also underscores the importance of the work of agencies providing critical support to the Palestinian people. In this regard, we stress the importance of UNRWA as an indispensable lifeline for Palestinians. We further stress the need to ensure adequate funding for UNRWA.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

As we discuss the current catastrophic situation in Gaza as a result of the violence unleashed by Israel since the October 7th attacks by Hamas - both of which we condemn - we must not forget that this is a symptom of the failure to address the core issue - that of a two-state solution where the peoples of Palestine and Israel live side by side.

Mr. President, dear colleagues,

As this Council prepares to consider the State of Palestine's membership of the United Nations, Guyana sees a perverse paradox. We have on the one hand, a situation where one of the two States - Palestine - who notwithstanding the horrors they continue to face under decades of occupation, continues to believe in the United Nations, and is therefore here once again seeking membership. On the other hand, we have the other State - a full member of the UN since 1949 - who is relentless in denigrating and denouncing the United Nations, including today, being the most ardent opposer to the State of Palestine's application for membership. Guyana will not let such a perverse paradox derail our support for the Palestine as a UN member. We must end this injustice and deliver on the decades-old commitment made by the international community - by this Council and the General Assembly - for the creation of a free and independent State of Palestine. The admission of the State of Palestine as a member of the UN is a critical and necessary step in this direction and we hope that when the question is put to us later, all hands would be raised to vote in favor of the legitimate and just request of the Palestinian people.

The resolution of the Palestinian question requires political will and decisions based in principles of truth, justice and fairness. Guyana is prepared to work with this Council and all members of the United Nations to make those decisions to secure the freedom and dignity of the Palestinian people.

I end, Mr. President, by expressing Guyana's full and unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people.

I thank you.



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