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Statement by

**H.E. Mr Robert Golob**

**Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia**

at the

**UNSC Briefing**

**Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question**

New York, 27 September 2024

I want to start by thanking the Secretary General for his briefing and acknowledge the number of high-level participants at this meeting.

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Your excellencies,

After this week's debate on leadership for peace, I am convinced that making a daily choice for peace is also a sign of courage. To ensure peace in the region we must make tangible and bold steps to protect the two-state solution. I am not talking about an empty slogan. **We need courage from leaders in the region and from this Council to change the trajectory we are on.** The facts on the ground are making the prospects for a two-state solution almost non-existent.

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**Firstly, we can no longer stand idle: every single leader must contribute to achieving peace.** The war in Gaza has now lasted almost a year. A year of hostages kept in the tunnels. A year which has brought suffering, killing and destruction.

And this is in addition to decades of suffering, killing and destruction in the entire occupied Palestinian territory.

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Many of us around the table have stepped up our efforts to ensure humanitarian assistance and made contributions to different organisations providing glimpses of humanity and hope to the people in Gaza, including UNRWA.

But humanitarian efforts alone are not enough. We need concrete political moves. Slovenia recognised the State of Palestine this June, and I call on others to do the same. The recognition of Palestine is an extremely important political signal, and a message of encouragement for the Palestinians in their struggle for statehood.

**Firstly, we must support initiatives empowering the Palestinian Authority Government to take control over the entire Palestinian state and regain the trust of the Palestinian people.**

**Secondly, we must work together.** This Council has adopted numerous resolutions on this conflict, including four on this war. The ICJ has been clear in its provisional measures and its latest advisory opinion. The occupation must end. Practices and policies such as illegal settlements, settler violence and human rights violations must end. This Council must be united and clear in its call for immediate implementation of its resolutions and the decisions of the ICJ. There should be no double standards or selectivity. If even only one of us is not protected by international law, then none of us can really rely on it.

**Thirdly, we must act to prevent peace in the region from slipping away.** We can no longer simply express our concern about the potential regional spill-over, as the spiral of violence has gradually become more complex. This week we have seen an enormous escalation in Lebanon. These attacks must cease. We call for restraint by all actors and respect for international law. The Council must clearly respond to this threat to international peace and security. We cannot let another Gaza happen, and what is happening in Lebanon is a further sign that we urgently need to deliver on the ceasefire deal.

**Fourthly, we must not forget about the West Bank and East Jerusalem.** As the world focuses on Gaza, the situation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem has reached a boiling point. Israeli dehumanisation of Palestinians has reached a new height. The number of Palestinian children in the West Bank who have been killed by Israeli forces has nearly tripled in a year. The death toll in the West Bank since October 7 is the highest in the last 15 years. There has also been a dramatic increase in the intensity of settlement expansion, which involves numerous human rights violations.

Your excellencies,

Standing for peace cannot be in the form of hatred, escalation, provocation, occupation or terrorism. Standing for peace is through the normalisation of ties, negotiation in good faith, equality and respect for international law. Only a just solution of two states, Israel and Palestine, side by side in peace and security, can turn a new page for the security and prosperity of the region.

And what is this Council doing? Definitely not enough!

I have therefore instructed my Ambassador to start consultations on a possible new humanitarian resolution on Palestine. Thank you.