

Cycle of violence moves us further away from a peaceful future for Israelis and Palestinians

Thank you, Madam President. I give thanks to the Special Coordinator and to Robi Damelin and Daniel Munayer for their insightful and powerful briefings. Sadly, the world's attention has been drawn repeatedly to the fragile situation in the Middle East this month.

We started with an appalling terror attack on innocent Israeli citizens in Elad as they celebrated their Independence Day. Our thoughts remain with the three victims and their families. We condemn the recent attacks against Israelis in the strongest possible terms, and reaffirm that the UK stands with Israel in the face of terrorism and violence.

We then witnessed the tragic killing of veteran Palestinian-American Al-Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh in Jenin, and the deeply disturbing scenes of the disproportionate use of force by Israeli police at her funeral. We urge a swift, transparent and impartial investigation into these events and meaningful accountability.

The United Kingdom is a strong defender of media freedom. The work of journalists across the globe is vital and they must be protected when carrying out their critical work.

We also saw the advancement of over 4000 settlement units in the West Bank, and the increased risk of eviction of over 1000 Palestinians in Masafer Yatta. We are clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, settlements, demolitions and forced evictions are illegal under International Humanitarian Law. We call on the Israeli government to halt all settlement expansion and evictions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Madam President, this ongoing cycle of violence only moves us further away from the peaceful solution that both Israelis and Palestinians deserve. We urge the parties to return to dialogue and take urgent steps to make progress towards peace.

We saw evidence of the value of dialogue and collaboration at the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, chaired by Norway, in Brussels this month. We were pleased to see commitments from the parties to advance economic cooperation. The United Kingdom is fully supporting these efforts and is ready to support further.

To be clear, we believe momentum on economic issues must be in tandem with political commitment to make progress towards peace. And, we reaffirm, as we did with our partners at the G7 meeting of Foreign Ministers this month, "our commitment to a negotiated Two-State solution, which envisions both Israel and a viable Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and security and

mutual recognition.”

Thank you.