

Aboul Gheit's address at the emergency ministerial meeting on developments in Gaza

11 October 2023

Your Excellency Mr. Nasser Bourita,

Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates for the Kingdom of Morocco,

Your Excellencies the ministers,

Esteemed guests,

Our Council is convening today in challenging circumstances. The ongoing escalation between Hamas and the Israelis is unprecedented in its intensity and impact.

There exist serious possibilities for the situation to deteriorate further and for confrontations to widen in scope. These are prospects that I earnestly hope will not materialise, as they could plunge the entire region into uncharted territory.

This perilous moment necessitates that everyone exercises the utmost self-restraint and considers the repercussions.

The retaliatory operations conducted and planned by the Israeli occupation forces will not usher in stability. Instead, they will thrust us into more cycles of violence and bloodshed. The collective punishments they impose on the residents of Gaza are repudiated and condemned under international law. We express our solidarity with the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip who are currently enduring this. It is an atrocity that must be halted immediately and denounced in the strongest terms.

Nobody desired such an escalation. I categorically and unequivocally denounce any violence against civilians. The killing of civilians and the intimidation of the innocent are unacceptable methods for achieving a noble political goal, such as independence.

I appeal for an immediate ceasefire and an end to this dangerous escalation, so that we can avert a more perilous situation, one that places the stability of the entire region under serious threat.

Over recent years, your esteemed council has consistently articulated unambiguous positions, cautioning that the situation in occupied Palestine is approaching a breaking point. The current escalation is not a sudden occurrence, but rather stems from root causes that are known to all, including the denial of Palestinian rights and the treatment of Palestinians, regardless of their political affiliations, in the West Bank or Gaza, as a mere security concern. This has led to the creation of an occupation regime that is widely acknowledged to be based on an apartheid system, undermining the two-state solution on a daily basis through continuous settlement and land annexation. All of this has sapped hope for any political resolution and brought us to the unfortunate and perilous juncture at which we now find ourselves.

In addition, over the past years, Arab countries have pursued a path to resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict based on the Arab Peace Initiative and the two-state framework. This is the only approach that ensures security, peace, and stability for all. Regrettably, Israel has viewed settlement expansion as a means to advance peace and prioritised land preservation over safeguarding the future for upcoming generations. Its government persists in oppressing and provoking Palestinians, while some of its representatives disseminate hate speech and incitement.

In short, I emphasise that there exists a path that can save the lives of all civilians. It is the sole rational route that secures the lives, safety, and future of both peoples: the cessation of the occupation and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

I hope that the voice of reason will rise above calls for revenge. I pray for an immediate cessation of the cycle of violence, for it will only lead to more tragedies and suffering. Events may spiral out of control for any party, with unpredictable consequences for all.

I eagerly anticipate the day when everyone in Palestine and Israel enjoys security, dignity, and freedom within two states coexisting in peace and security. New generations deserve to live free from cycles of hatred and violence. Perhaps this moment will remind us, despite all the apprehension and pain it carries, that there is no escape from the imperative of peace. Blocking the political horizon will only result in recurring rounds of violence and instability.

Thank you.