



**About Gheit's speech before the UNSC at the high-level session on the situation in Gaza
29 November 2023**

Your Excellency, Mr. Wang Yi,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China

Distinguished guests,

Allow me to focus my remarks today on four key points:

Firstly, each passing day with the persistent Israeli aggression on Gaza propels us farther from the prospect of sustainable peace in the future. The widespread loss of life and destruction, coupled with the collective punishment imposed by the Israeli occupation, cultivates enduring resentment and anger in Palestine and the broader region. These actions leave lasting wounds that won't easily heal.

Hence, those advocating for peace must recognise the immense peril associated with continuing an open war conducted in this manner. The cost of this ongoing massacre is not borne solely by Palestinian civilians, including children and women who lose their lives or their loved ones; rather, we will all bear this cost in the future. Therefore, it is imperative to work towards an immediate cessation of hostilities, transforming the humanitarian truce into a prolonged and complete ceasefire. This entails ensuring the restoration of calm and assisting the people in Gaza to reclaim their minimum semblance of normal life. This responsibility primarily falls on your Council, not only concerning the millions of civilians in Gaza but also regarding the prospects for a future of peace and stability in the region.

Secondly, addressing the humanitarian catastrophe left in the wake of the Israeli war machine, whose horrors unfold daily, is an urgent and global responsibility. We witness Gazans attempting to rebuild their homes amid the ruins in the northern Gaza Strip. Entire systems of life lie in ruins after 50 days of comprehensive bombardment. The overwhelming majority of Gaza's population has been displaced within their own country, without shelter and lacking life's basic necessities. Introducing humanitarian aid within a sustainable and effective framework becomes the crucial difference between life and death for millions of people cramped into shelter tents and UNRWA schools in the south.



Many overlook the stark reality that the aid reaching Gaza falls far below the minimum required for the residents' needs, essentially serving as a death sentence for hundreds of thousands of people. It translates to nothing less than famine and the potential spread of epidemics.

The onus is on this Council. We eagerly await a swift decision that will facilitate the entry of aid and essential materials crucial for human sustenance, encompassing food, medicine, clothing, and fuel. This process should be executed through a prompt and efficient mechanism that aligns with the gravity of the horrendous humanitarian disaster, preventing the unacceptable scenario of death by starvation or disease, as opposed to death by bombing.

Thirdly, while halting the Israeli aggression is an absolute priority per the Arab-Islamic Summit, we recognise the imperative of looking towards the future. We urge your Council to cast its gaze to the political horizon of this distressing situation. Regardless of the current painful and, at times, shameful circumstances, the future signifies one unavoidable reality: the imperative emergence of an independent Palestinian state along the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Contemplating a future for the Gaza Strip isolated from the state or considering the displacement of Palestinians or adopting outdated "security" solutions has proven their abject failure. Instead, it is essential to chart a course that respects the rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people and leads to a just and lasting resolution.

Sound reasoning demands swift action to achieve the two-state solution, a well-defined framework agreed upon over 30 years ago that enjoys global consensus. This solution embodies the essence of the Arab Peace Initiative launched more than two decades ago, with the occupying state being the sole entity that rejects it.

Implementing this solution on the ground necessitates a bold and decisive confrontation with the occupation's illusions of keeping the land and pursuing security. The alternative path of an apartheid state, devoid of rights for the Palestinian people and lacking a political horizon, is unequivocally rejected by the international community.

The road to a two-state solution does not traverse endless negotiations but requires a resolute international will to promptly transform it into reality—



putting an end to the occupation and establishing an independent Palestinian state.

The ongoing war against the Palestinian people in Gaza presents a timely opportunity that must be seized before time runs out. We seek a settlement ensuring that such tragedies will not recur—providing freedom and dignity for the Palestinians and security and peace for the Israelis.

This settlement becomes feasible only with concerted international will through an international conference. The conference should delineate a specific path with a clear timeframe in the near future, ending the last extended military occupation on earth, establishing a Palestinian state, and achieving a peaceful separation between the two peoples, backed by security guarantees from the international community to sustain this settlement.

Fourth, and lastly, the war on Gaza has yielded a positive development evident in the global public opinion's awareness of the universality and comprehensiveness of moral values, rejecting blatant double standards. Simultaneously, it has stirred immense anger and a sense of betrayal, particularly among Arab and Islamic peoples, highlighting a letdown of the world order meant to be based on rules and respect for international law. This disappointment extends to those who previously championed moral values and principles but altered their positions with changing circumstances.

Restoring confidence, not only among all peoples but especially among Arabs and Muslims, in the fairness and comprehensiveness of international rules is crucial. Failing to address this may lead to a bitter harvest of pent-up anger, easily exploited by extremist trends.

The path to restoring confidence is clear at this crucial moment, as Secretary-General Antonio Guterres candidly noted. It involves taking a principled stance based on humanity and morals, irrespective of religion, race, or nationality. This entails rejecting deviations from international humanitarian law and condemning any violator, regardless of the party involved. It also requires an absolute rejection and condemnation of civilian casualties, without selectivity or partiality. Only by doing so can we shield the global community from the perils of conflicts based on civilisations and religions. Your Council plays a pivotal role in this endeavour.

Thank you.