

**Mr. Vieira (Brazil):**

I would like to begin my statement on behalf of Brazil by thanking the Government of Sweden for organizing this debate and welcoming the newly elected non-permanent members of the Security Council: Bolivia, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Italy and Sweden.

The various conflicts in the Middle East are a matter of grave concern for the international community, particularly the United Nations, but more so for the inhabitants of that region — the first victims of what looks like an endless cycle of violence. Brazil, as well as the international community in its overwhelming majority, supports a negotiated settlement to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians — one that meets Israel's security needs and the Palestinian right to statehood and sovereignty, as Brazil has constantly advocated, and one that fully takes into account resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), among others. We have repeatedly appealed to both sides to refrain from acts of violence that may push the parties further away from the negotiating table and the two-State solution that we all envision. We firmly repudiate all terrorist activities, regardless of their motivation. As Secretary-General António Guterres has stated, such acts should not be allowed to deter the parties from the need for a renewed commitment to dialogue.

Brazil appreciatively takes note of and welcomes Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), which condemns all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror as well as all acts of provocation, incitement and destruction, and reaffirms that Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory are illegal under international law and an obstacle for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. It comes as an important addition to a stock of Security Council resolutions: resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 478 (1980), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003), and 1850 (2008), which represent an instrument that the international community uses to point the parties in the direction of peace. We expect that that initiative and the Paris Peace Conference held last weekend will motivate further multilateral efforts favouring the return to meaningful negotiations between the parties, thereby leading to the establishment of two States, Israel and Palestine, living peacefully side-by-side with internationally recognized borders.

The recently announced nationwide ceasefire in Syria, brokered by Turkey and the Russian Federation and supported by resolution 2236 (2016), represents a much-needed measure of hope in the efforts to reach a political solution to the conflict. We welcome those developments. Brazil urges all parties to respect the ceasefire and engage constructively in the negotiations to take place in Astana and Geneva, based on the road map established by resolution 2254 (2015), allowing for an inclusive and Syrian-led political process.

Last month, Brazil supported two important decisions of the General Assembly

concerning Syria. Resolution 71/130 demanded an immediate end to attacks on civilians throughout the country, while resolution 71/248 established the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of those Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. Those initiatives confirmed that the Assembly can have a relevant role in seeking peace and accountability for Syria without prejudice to the responsibilities of the Security Council.

Brazil welcomed the resolution of the political impasse in Lebanon with the election of President Michel Aoun and the formation of a Government of National Accord under Prime Minister Saad Hariri. We congratulate the new Lebanese leadership and reiterate our long-term commitment to the development and stability of Lebanon, including through our participation in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Brazil underlines that the strategic review of UNIFIL currently being undertaken by the Secretariat, as called for in resolution 2305 (2016), must take into consideration the strategic, operative and financial needs of the mission, as well as its highly volatile security environment.

With regard to Iraq, we are concerned by the humanitarian impact of the ongoing military operations in Mosul. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports that approximately 140,000 people have been displaced by hostilities in and around the city — a figure that continues to rise. Food and water shortages are affecting the civilians of Mosul, who are already being subjected to a harsh winter. In Mosul and elsewhere in Iraq, we strongly condemn tactics attributed to the what is known as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) that may constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity, including forced displacements, attacks against humanitarian workers and the use of civilians as human shields. We highlight the need to plan long-term stabilization and reconstruction efforts in Mosul. Another priority should be the long-term reconciliation of all ethnic and religious communities coexisting in the areas once occupied by ISIL. Women, girls, minorities and other vulnerable populations deserve particular attention in that regard.

Lastly, on Yemen, we regret the absence of a durable cessation of hostilities as well as the parties' unwillingness to accept the road map for negotiations proposed by Special Envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, whose work we support.

In conclusion, Brazil urges all Yemeni actors and their external supporters to renew efforts towards a negotiated solution and to avoid unilateral measures that might jeopardize this process.

