



**PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK**

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NEW YORK, 21 JULY 2020

SECURITY COUNCIL – OPEN VTC ON THE MIDDLE EAST

**STATEMENT ATTRIBUTABLE TO H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER**

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. President,

Not for the first time this year, Liechtenstein approaches the quarterly open debate on the Middle East in an atmosphere of grave concern. Foremost among today's issues is the continued spectre of annexation of parts of the West Bank by Israel. Liechtenstein reiterates its long-held position that the annexation of territory, or any decision to change or amend the border between Israel and Palestine without the explicit consent of both parties, is in violation of international law and relevant Security Council resolutions. Such actions are illegal regardless of the scale or speed of annexation. Far from making Israel more secure, annexation undermines the prospect of a two-state solution based on applicable international law, in particular international humanitarian law, and relevant Security Council resolutions, which remain the only viable pathway to a sustainable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Liechtenstein will in all situations implement its policy, in accordance with international law, not to recognize as lawful any annexation of territory.

Liechtenstein notes the ongoing proceedings in Pre-Trial Chamber I of the International Criminal Court with regard to the situation in Palestine, and looks forward to its decision in due course. Such proceedings by a standing and authoritative international court are the expression of an effective international rules-based order, as advocated consistently by large parts of the UN membership. Political attacks against the ICC can only intend to weaken the rule of law, to

undermine multilateralism and to strengthen the rule of might – a trend that we are determined to oppose, along with many others. We will thus continue our support for the ICC in providing justice undeterred and with the confidence of its broadly supported mandate.

Mr. President,

Liechtenstein regrets the withdrawal of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the US from the JCPOA, decisions which undoubtedly make the world a less safe place. The JCPOA was a milestone achievement of multilateral diplomacy that strengthened the international rules-based order and achieved concrete results in terms of nuclear non-proliferation. Full compliance with its terms needs to be restored. Liechtenstein also recalls that resolution 2231 remains in force and thus continues to be binding on all States, with a special responsibility for all members of the Security Council.

Mr. President,

We have followed closely the process leading to the passing of resolution 2553, which will allow millions in North-West Syria, particularly in and around Idlib, to continue to receive aid. However, the process of arriving at the resolution has demonstrated, once again, that the Council is unable to muster the political will to prioritize the protection of the Syrian people, even if the humanitarian necessities are perfectly clear, and to agree on measures that are commensurate to the challenge at hand. Based on the information available, we must conclude that the agreement found in the Council is likely to exacerbate the humanitarian suffering in the country, short of bringing more permanent relief. We thank those members of the Security Council who have put their collective weight behind achieving this minimal solution for the continued cross-border delivery of aid, in particular the penholders. In contrast, the use of the veto by two permanent members of the Council to block two previous draft resolutions from the penholders, and subsequently ensure an end to aid deliveries through the Bab Al-Salam and Al-Yaroubiah

border crossings, is deplorable. We are concerned that people in Northern Aleppo and North-Eastern Syria will suffer due to these actions, just as they have done as a result of the fourteen previous vetoes regarding the situation in Syria over the past seven years. It is long past time that such flagrant use of the veto is met with a response from the wider membership including through action in the General Assembly.

Despite the fact that the membership has expressed itself predominantly and clearly on the need to ensure accountability for the worst crimes committed in Syria, the Security Council continues to ignore the call for an ICC referral. In this context, the decision to create the IIIM in late 2016 is increasingly relevant in the quest to bring a measure of justice for the atrocities that have been committed in Syria. The IIIM's diligent work is a constant reminder of the central role of criminal accountability in any political process aimed at sustainable peace and genuine reconciliation in Syria. Liechtenstein welcomes the clear commitment to that effect by the participants of the Brussels IV conference and remains fully aligned with it.

I thank you.