

STATEMENT

BY THE HONORABLE MANEESH GOBIN

**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND
INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 24 OCTOBER 2023

Mr. Speaker, Sir,

1. With your kind permission and for the benefit of the House, I would like to make a statement on the situation in the Middle East and on the stance of Mauritius regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict.
2. Since January 2023, there has been an escalation of violence between the Israeli authorities and the Palestine forces.
3. After a new surge of violence, on 07 April 2023, my Ministry issued a Communiqué deploring the acts of violence perpetrated against Palestinian worshippers at Al-Aqsa Mosque at such a sacred time for the Muslims, Christians and Jews. Mauritius also called upon all parties to exercise restraint and refrain from taking actions that escalate tensions.
4. My colleague Hon. Alan Ganoo, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade made a Statement in the House on 11 April 2023 highlighting the principled stance of Mauritius on the Israeli-Palestine conflict. He recalled that Mauritius had voted in favour of all United Nations Resolutions condemning the illegal occupation of territories by Israel and ensuing blatant violations of Human Rights.
5. As the House is aware, in the morning of 07 October 2023, Hamas militants from Gaza launched an unprecedented combined air, land

and sea attacks on Israel leading to the killings of hundreds of civilians, causing hundreds of injuries and resulting in the taking of more than 200 hostages including women and children.

6. Like many countries, Mauritius promptly issued a Communiqué on 8 October 2023, expressing our deep concern over the unprecedented attacks perpetrated in Israel, which had claimed the lives of hundreds of persons and causing injury to numerous civilians on both sides.
7. The Communiqué also highlighted that Mauritius stands in solidarity with the families of all victims of this conflict and condemns all acts of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.
8. Mauritius called upon all parties concerned to refrain from taking actions that would spiral to more violence. Once again, Mauritius reiterated our longstanding position on the support to the Two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine coexisting side by side, for an enduring peace.

Mr. Speaker, Sir,

9. The United Nations Security Council held an emergency meeting on 8 October 2023 demanding a unanimous condemnation of these attacks, but following deliberations, the Members could not agree on the release of a Statement capturing the essence of their preoccupations.
10. As violence spread across the occupied territories, on 9 October 2023 Israel announced that it would completely cut-off essential supplies namely food, water and electricity to Gaza with immediate effect leading to calls from Human Rights activists and the international community condemning this decision.
11. To make matters worse, on 13 October 2023, the Israeli authorities ordered the evacuation, within 24 hours, of over 1 million civilians from the northern part of Gaza to the southern part of the enclave, thus aggravating of the humanitarian crisis.

12. In this rapidly deteriorating situation, a strike against Al Ahli Hospital on 17 October 2023 caused numerous loss of lives. My Ministry issued a Communique on the next day, reiterating its solidarity with the families of all the victims in this conflict and calling on all parties to implement an immediate ceasefire.
13. In reaction to the humanitarian crisis, the UN Secretary-General issued a statement underlining that Israel's ultimatum is "extremely dangerous and simply not possible as even wars have rules". Mauritius supports the stance of the UN Secretary General proposing the setting-up of a humanitarian corridor to facilitate the passage of the refugees and the supply of basic necessities.
14. Mauritius joins the international community in calling for the unconditional release of all hostages. In that regard, Mauritius commends all parties involved in negotiations for the release of two hostages on 20 October 2023. We hope that the release of more hostages will follow.
15. Mauritius fully supports all the ongoing efforts aimed at defusing the crisis and commends Egypt for hosting the Conference on the Middle East. The Summit's primary aim was to foster peace and stability through the advancement of the stalled peace process.
16. Mauritius continues to follow the situation and supports the various initiatives to reset the peace process between Israel and Palestine on the international agenda. This is the only pathway for a resolution of this longstanding issue.
17. My Ministry and our diplomatic missions are contributing in the process by voicing our concerns. We believe that the international community can collectively address the issue through negotiations.
18. While on this chapter, I would like to inform the House that hours after the attacks by Hamas, my Ministry took a pre-emptive approach, anticipating requests for consular assistance from Mauritian nationals

who might be stranded in Israel. Our Embassy in Cairo and our Honorary Consulate in Tel Aviv were requested to be on a readiness mode for providing consular assistance as may be required.

19. A Communique was issued on Sunday 08 October 2023 informing the public that a Hotline has been set up at my Ministry to respond to calls and requests for assistance from Mauritian nationals stranded in Israel.

20. My Ministry was informed of the presence of three groups of Mauritian pilgrims of different faiths, consisting of 62 nationals, who were stranded in Israel. My Ministry had consultations with our Honorary Consul in Israel, the Honorary Consul of Israel in Mauritius and representatives of the different groups in Mauritius.

21. I am pleased to inform that these concerted efforts ensured the exit of all the stranded Mauritian nationals from Israel and their safe return to Mauritius.

Thank You