



## **Joint Statement by BRICS Deputy Foreign Ministers and Special Envoys on the Middle East and North Africa**

1. BRICS Deputy Foreign Ministers and Special Envoys on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) met on 25 April 2024 in Moscow, Russia, to exchange views on the current situation in the region.
2. They expressed serious concern over continued conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa, especially the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, that pose threats to regional and international peace, stability and security. Equally, they stated that regional crises should be resolved exclusively through political and diplomatic dialogue based on unconditional respect for independence, territorial integrity, and sovereignty of all MENA countries.
3. They reaffirmed their commitment to the basic principle that peace and security in the MENA region should be achieved and sustained in accordance with, and in full respect for, international law and the United Nations (UN) Charter. They reaffirmed the primary role of the UN Security Council (UNSC) in maintaining international peace and security. They acknowledged the important role played by regional organisations, including the League of Arab States (LAS) and the African Union (AU), in addressing threats to peace and security in accordance with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. They advocated for the strengthening of multilateralism as a means to promoting and ensuring peace, stability and development in the MENA region.
4. They stressed that peace and stability in the MENA region requires developmental cooperation and integration. They reiterated the necessity to address the root causes contributing to regional tensions. They called on the international community to support the countries in the region in working together towards post-pandemic economic recovery. They emphasised the importance of contributing to post-conflict countries' reconstruction and development by supporting greater economic diversification in oil producing countries. They called upon the international community to assist MENA countries in meeting their development goals.
5. They agreed to condemn terrorism and confront extremism in all its forms and manifestations and called on countries of the region to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to terrorism. They reaffirmed the importance of promoting the values of moderation, tolerance and peaceful coexistence. They expressed their concern about deployment of Foreign Terrorist Fighters to the region as well as transfer of terrorists to the conflict zones. Furthermore, they stressed the importance of coordination role of the UN and opposing double standards. They called for further consolidation and strengthening of the working methods of UN Security Council Sanctions Committees to ensure their effectiveness, responsiveness and transparency. They agreed that terrorism and extremism must not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization, or ethnic group. They reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation with countries

of the region on counterterrorism. They called for an expeditious finalisation and adoption of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism under the UN umbrella.

6. They expressed grave concern at the deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in particular the unprecedented escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip as a result of the Israeli military operation that led to mass civilian deaths and casualties and destruction of civilian infrastructure including hospitals, schools, places of worship and UN facilities.

In this regard they called for the effective implementation of UNSC resolution 2728 to achieve an immediate, durable, and sustained ceasefire.

They acknowledged the provisional measures of the International Court of Justice in the legal proceedings instituted by South Africa against Israel.

They strongly condemned all acts of violence aimed at civilians including acts of terrorism and indiscriminate attacks, as well as all acts of incitement of hatred, dehumanization, destruction and provocation and violations of International human rights law and International humanitarian law.

They emphasized that all sides must adhere to their obligations under International humanitarian law and International human rights law, particularly in regard to the protection of civilians and civilian objects.

They equally called for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages and civilians who are being illegally held captive, demanding their safety, well-being, and humane treatment in compliance with international law.

They expressed their deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian situation including the onset of famine in the Gaza Strip and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. They reiterated the need for full respect of international humanitarian law in conflict situations and the need for full, immediate, safe, unhindered, and sustained humanitarian access and the provision of aid at scale in accordance with the basic principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence established in UNGA resolution 46/182. They emphasized the need for increased access to humanitarian aid, immediate, continuous, sufficient and unhindered provision of essential goods and services to civilians in the Gaza strip including water, food, medical supplies, fuel and electricity and for this goal to open necessary crossings to the Gaza Strip.

They expressed their strong condemnation of the killing of humanitarian aid workers and targeting of humanitarian premises in Gaza which has significantly impacted humanitarian operations in the Gaza Strip.

They reaffirmed their support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and its capacity to uphold its mandate and stressed the need to prevent any interruption or suspension of its vital work which would result in growth of serious humanitarian, political and security risks.

They reiterated their strong support for all regional efforts, including those of Egypt, and international efforts aimed at achieving an immediate cessation of hostilities, ensuring the protection of civilians and providing humanitarian aid including the UN humanitarian efforts pursuant to its Security Council resolution 2720.

They emphasized the importance of preventing further destabilization and escalation of violence in the region and called upon all parties to exercise maximum restraint and upon all those with influence on them to work toward this objective.

They reaffirmed that a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be achieved by peaceful means. They reiterated their unwavering commitment to the vision of the two-state solution based on international law including relevant UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative that includes the establishment of a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine in line with international recognized borders of June 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital living side by side in peace and security with Israel.

They confirmed that the Gaza Strip is an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In this regard they stressed the importance of contiguity of the Palestinian territories and in that context underlined the importance of unifying the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under the Palestinian authority. They supported internal Palestinian reconciliation through consultation and dialogue, noting regional and international efforts aimed at restoring Palestinian unity on the political platform of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

They reiterated their unwavering support to the Palestinian request to become a full member of the United Nations.

They expressed grave concern with the intensification of settlement policy in the West Bank as well as with demolitions, including in East Jerusalem, and agreed these settlements are illegal under international law and must be stopped and reversed. They also condemned the displacement of Palestinians from their homes and strongly rejected any plan of moving Palestinian communities outside of the Gaza strip, as well as Israeli plans to attack Rafah.

They emphasized the inadmissibility of altering the historical and legal status quo in Jerusalem and its Islamic and Christian sanctities and reaffirmed the significance of the historical Hashemite custodianship.

7. They underlined the importance to prevent the expansion of the armed confrontation in the zone of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. They emphasized their firm support for Lebanon's stability, security, sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity. They reiterated the Lebanese people's rights to pursue a development path suited to their national conditions. They reiterated their opposition to international interference in Lebanon's domestic affairs. They called on the international community to support Lebanon in its efforts to restore political, social and economic stability. They encouraged the various political forces in Lebanon to elect the next President of the Republic, which is the utmost importance in order to pave the way for the comprehensive dialogue necessary for the country to overcome the challenges it currently faces.

They stressed the importance of fully implementing all relevant Security Council resolutions, including Resolution 1701, and urged all parties involved to refrain from all acts of provocation and violations of sovereignty. They highlighted the vital role played by UNIFIL, especially in current times, and agreed it is imperative to ensure the safety, security and freedom of movement of all United Nations personnel and to respect the integrity of UN premises, while continuing to coordinate with the Government of Lebanon in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

8. They stressed that the key to solving the Syrian issue is to follow the principles enshrined in relevant UNSC resolutions, specifically 2254, in particular promotion of the “Syrian-led, Syrian-owned, UN-facilitated political process” of reconciliation and inclusiveness, respect for Syria’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and international support to the Syrians in their humanitarian needs, giving priority to people’s livelihoods and accelerating early recovery projects. They condemned all illegitimate actions and provocations by any external forces that lead to increasing the risks of a large-scale conflict in the region. They welcomed the resumption of Syria’s participation in the League of Arab States and commended the efforts of the Arab Ministerial Contact Group and Syria as cited in Cairo and Amman declarations, emphasised the importance of continuation of the efforts for the Syrian-Turkish normalisation and supported all the steps conducive to the political resolution of the Syrian issue, including those of the Astana Format. They stressed their continued support for the efforts of the UN Special Envoy for Syria as well as for the resumption of the work of the Constitutional Committee as soon as possible. They emphasised the need to support efforts to combat terrorism in Syria in all its forms and manifestations, in accordance with the provisions of international law.
9. They condemned the attack against the diplomatic premises of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Syrian capital Damascus by Israel on 1 April 2024 that constitutes a violation of the fundamental principle of the inviolability of diplomatic and consular premises under the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and, following attack on 14 April 2024 in response by Iran, they called for immediate de-escalation, exercise of restraint.
10. They reaffirmed their support for Yemen’s sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and for a political settlement to the Yemeni issue. They called on all parties to engage in inclusive negotiations, mediated by the UN, and conveyed appreciation for the efforts of the United Nation’s Secretary General (UNSG)’s Special Envoy in this regard. They reiterated their deep concern about Yemen’s humanitarian crisis and encouraged the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to Yemen. They welcomed and commended the efforts of regional countries including Saudi Arabia and Oman to address the situation in Yemen through direct talks with the parties concerned and mediation efforts aimed at establishment of permanent ceasefire as well as moving forward of the political settlement process.
11. They expressed deep concern regarding the repercussions of the attacks on maritime navigation in Baab Al-Mandab and the Red Sea. They reaffirmed that the exercise of navigational rights and freedoms by merchant and commercial vessels transiting the Red Sea and Baab Al-Mandab strait, in accordance with international law, must be respected.
12. They stressed the importance of the international community’s constant engagement with Iraq, and to further develop cooperation prospects in various fields in a way that serves the interest of the country, its people and wider region. They reiterated their firm support for Iraq’s sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity. They reaffirmed their support for Iraq in safeguarding their national security and stability and fighting terrorism. They reaffirmed their support for the Iraqi people in their quest for peace, prosperity, and development. They reaffirmed their opposition to any external interference in Iraq’s domestic affairs, and supported Iraq’s efforts to promote economic reconstruction and to play a greater role in regional affairs. They expressed their hope that all parties in Iraq would engage in a mutually respectful and inclusive dialogue to achieve lasting stability and prosperity.

13. They stressed their support for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya. They reiterated their support for a “Libyan-led and Libyan-owned” political process with UN-led mediation and acknowledge in this regard the endeavours of regional organizations and the neighbouring countries of Libya. They reiterated their respect for the will and choice of the Libyan people and called on all parties to strengthen consultation and dialogue and to refrain from any actions that could undermine the October 2020 ceasefire and emphasised the necessity that all foreign forces, foreign fighters, and mercenaries withdraw from Libya without further delay in a synchronized, phased, gradual and balanced manner. They welcomed the efforts of the League of Arab States, African Union, including its High-Level Committee for Libya, in restoring stability and fostering the unification of Libya. They reaffirmed their call to hold simultaneous, free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections as soon as possible. They reaffirmed their call on all parties to create necessary conditions for holding elections, based on a sound and agreed constitutional framework.
14. They stressed their support for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Sudan. They expressed deep concern over the ongoing conflict in Sudan. They called for non-interference in the Sudanese conflict. They expressed grave concern over the humanitarian situation in the country. They called for redoubling of global efforts to address the worsening humanitarian crisis. They deeply regret the deaths and injuries of civilians. They called for an unconditional, urgent and sustained ceasefire and stressed the need to respect international law, including International humanitarian law. They also stressed the importance of a Sudanese-led process toward restoration of civilian rule. They encouraged all parties in Sudan to return to political process so that peace can be achieved. They stressed the need of preventing the conflict from expanding to other countries in the region and underscored the need for harmonized and coordinated peace process, including the recognition of the role of the AU and under Sudanese national ownership. They reiterated their support to regional efforts aimed at finding a peaceful and diplomatic solution to the crisis. They welcomed regional efforts and initiatives aimed at conveying basic messages in order to halt escalation and reach a sustainable ceasefire agreement, as well as to preserve the cohesion of the Sudanese state, and to urge the international community to provide all humanitarian and medical assistance to meet the needs of the Sudanese people.
15. They agreed to meet again under Brazil’s Chairship of BRICS in 2025. In this regard they reiterated the need to hold regular consultations on the Middle East and North Africa, including at the UN. They decided to hold annual working-level mid-term consultations in preparation for the BRICS Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Special Envoys meeting on the Middle East and North Africa.

**Moscow, Russian Federation**  
**25 April 2024**