Federal Foreign Office (Germany) — auswaertiges-amt.de

G7 Foreign Ministers’ Meeting Communiqué (Capri, April 19, 2024) – Situation in the Middle East

2024-04-19

1. Iran

We, the G7 Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, and the High Representative of the European Union, condemn in the strongest terms Iran’s direct and unprecedented attack against Israel of April 13-14, which Israel defeated with the help of its partners. This was a dangerous escalation, as Iran fired hundreds of ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and drones.

We also condemn the Iranian boarding and seizure, in breach of international law, of the Portuguese flagged merchant vessel MSC Aries by armed personnel, which occurred while the merchant vessel was sailing near the Strait of Hormuz. We call for the immediate release of the vessel, its crews and cargo.

Israel and its people have our full solidarity and support and we reaffirm our commitment towards Israel’s security. Iran’s actions mark an unacceptable step towards the destabilization of the region and a further escalation, which must be avoided. In light of reports of strikes on April 19th , we urge all parties to work to prevent further escalation. The G7 will continue to work to this end.

We call on all parties, both in the region and beyond, to offer their positive contribution to this collective effort.

We call on Iran to refrain from providing support to Hamas and taking further actions that destabilize the Middle East, including support for Lebanese Hezbollah and other non-state actors. Iran’s continued provision of arms and related materiel to the Houthis in violation of UNSCR 2216 and to other non-state actors in the region are dangerously increasing tensions. We call on all countries to prevent the supply of components or other items to Iran’s UAV and missile programmes.

We demand that Iran and its affiliated groups cease their attacks. We will hold the Iranian government accountable for its malicious and destabilizing actions and we stand ready to adopt further sanctions or take other measures, now and in response to further destabilizing initiatives.

We reiterate our determination that Iran must never develop or acquire a nuclear weapon. We urge Iran to cease and reverse nuclear escalations and to stop the continuing uranium enrichment activities reported by

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in the framework provided by UNSCR 2231 that have no credible civil justification and pose significant proliferative risks. Tehran must reverse this trend and engage in serious dialogue, returning to full cooperation with the

IAEA

to enable it to provide assurances that Iran's nuclear program is exclusively peaceful. We support

IAEA

's monitoring and verification role regarding Iran's nuclear-related obligation and commitments and express strong concern about Iran's current lack of cooperation with the Agency.

We are extremely concerned by reports that Iran is considering transferring ballistic missiles and related technology to Russia. We call on Iran not to do so, as it would represent a substantive material escalation in its support for Russia's war in Ukraine. Were Iran to proceed with providing ballistic missiles or related technology to Russia, we are prepared to respond in a swift and coordinated manner, including with new and significant measures against Iran.

We reiterate our deep concern over Iran's human rights violations and abuses, especially against women, girls and minority groups, and in light of the first report issued on March 8 by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission established by the Human Rights Council, which said that certain violations against "Women, Life, Freedom" protestors amounted to crimes against humanity.

We strongly reject Iran's targeting and arbitrary arrest of dual and foreign citizens and call on Iran's leadership to end all unjust and arbitrary detentions. We condemn Iran's harassment, intimidation and plots to kill perceived dissidents and opponents of the regime overseas, including journalists and religious figures, as well as the targeting of Jewish individuals and institutions.

2. Conflict in Gaza

We condemn in the strongest terms the brutal terrorist attacks conducted by Hamas and other terrorist groups against Israel that began on October 7, 2023. In exerting its right to

defend itself, Israel must fully comply with international law, including international humanitarian law. Hamas must release all hostages immediately and unconditionally. We continue to press for the full investigation of the horrific reports of sexual violence committed by Hamas and other terrorist groups and for perpetrators to be held accountable.

We deplore all losses of civilian lives and note with great concern the unacceptable number of civilians, including thousands of women, children and persons in vulnerable situations who have been killed in Gaza. We call for urgent action to address the devastating and growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza, particularly the plight of civilians throughout the territory. We reiterate our opposition to a full scale military operation in Rafah that would have catastrophic consequences on the civilian population. We reiterate our call for a credible and actionable plan to protect the civilian population there and address their humanitarian needs. We are deeply concerned by the internal displacement within Gaza and the risk of forcible displacement from Gaza. Israel must act in compliance with its obligations under international law and treat individuals humanely and with dignity, and should thoroughly and transparently investigate credible allegations of wrongdoing and ensure accountability for any abuses or violations.

We underscore the urgent need for specific, concrete, and measurable steps to significantly increase the flow of aid into Gaza in light of imminent risk of famine for a majority of Gaza's population. We urge the rapid implementation of steps announced by the Government of Israel including the commitment to expand flow of aid through existing land crossings, opening new land crossings, and facilitating aid to northern Gaza where humanitarian needs are most acute, including by opening more routes into Gaza. We welcome efforts to establish a maritime corridor to further increase the flow of much-needed humanitarian assistance into Gaza, in coordination with the United Nations. We reiterate that such corridors must complement and not be a substitute to expanded and sustained assistance flows by land.

Securing full, rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access in all its forms remains an absolute priority. We call on Israel to do more to ensure protection of international and local humanitarian aid workers, journalists, and Palestinian civilians, to improve humanitarian deconfliction, including communications, and to pursue full accountability, as appropriate, for incidents of harm against aid workers and civilians. We call on all parties to allow the unimpeded delivery of aid, including food, water, medical care, electricity, fuel, shelter, as well as facilitate the restoration of basic services and ensure access for humanitarian workers. All parties must protect civilians, especially those most vulnerable, particularly women, children, and people with disabilities, consistent with international humanitarian law.

Since the onset of the crisis, the G7 has been among the largest providers of assistance to the affected population in Gaza. We reiterate our intention to continue doing so and we call on all our partners to strengthen their efforts. We welcome the initiative "Food for Gaza" launched by Italy together with FAO,

WFP

and IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Society), aimed at better meeting the urgent demand for food security and primary health of the population.

We recognize the crucial role played by

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agencies and other humanitarian actors in delivering assistance.

UNRWA

has a vital role in the Gaza humanitarian response. We welcome the swift decision by the

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Secretary General to initiate an immediate investigation on

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to provide full transparency on the serious allegations against its staff and to appoint an independent review group also in view of the implementation of the needed reforms. We agreed it is critical that

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and other

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organizations and agencies' distribution networks be fully able to deliver aid to those who need it most, fulfilling their mandate effectively.

We call for an immediate release of hostages and a sustainable ceasefire that allows for a surge of the urgently needed humanitarian assistance to be delivered safely throughout Gaza. In this context, we strongly support the ongoing mediation efforts undertaken by the United States and regional partners to that aim, respected by all parties, leading to a sustainable cessation of hostilities, in order to facilitate the immediate return of all hostages, a surge of assistance and for the urgent implementation of UNSC resolutions 2712, 2720, and 2728. Hamas' refusal to release hostages is only prolonging the conflict and the suffering of civilians.

We welcome the new Palestinian Authority cabinet and remain ready to support the Palestinian Authority as it undertakes the reforms that are indispensable to enable it to take up its responsibilities in the aftermath of the conflict, in both Gaza and the West Bank.

We are also working, including by imposing sanctions and other measures, to deny Hamas the ability to raise funds to carry out further atrocities. Likewise, we will also continue our work to fight against the dissemination of terrorist content online.

All parties must refrain from unilateral actions that undermine the prospect of a two-state solution. We are concerned by rising levels of settlers' violence. Extremist settlers responsible for violent acts against Palestinian communities must be brought to account.

A viable solution to the conflict can only be the result of a coordinated regional effort. We remain committed to a lasting and sustainable peace based on a two-State solution and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with security guarantees for Israel and the Palestinians. We call for upholding unchanged the historic status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem. We concur that the final territory of a Palestinian state should be defined through negotiations based on 1967-lines. We note that the recognition of a Palestinian state, at the appropriate time, would be a crucial component of that political process.

We are working intensively – along with partners in the region – to prevent the conflict from escalating further. We are particularly concerned by the situation along the Blue Line. We recognize the essential stabilizing role played by the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the

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Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in mitigating that risk. We urge all involved to exercise restraint and to work toward de-escalation.

We oppose all discrimination and violence based on religion or belief and we call for effective protection of all members of religious minority groups. We strongly reject all forms of antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred.

3. Freedom of Navigation in the Red Sea

We condemn the attacks perpetrated by the Houthis against commercial vessels transiting the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and the navy ships protecting them. We are greatly concerned by the deaths of three innocent mariners aboard the True Confidence and the sinking of the Rubymar, which created a navigational hazard and a serious environmental threat. We call for the immediate release by the Houthis of the Galaxy Leader and its crew, seized on 19th November 2023. In line with UNSCR 2722, we reiterate our support for countries that exercise the right to defend their vessels from attacks, in accordance with international law. We also call for continued international involvement in close cooperation with the United Nations and coastal states, as well as with regional and sub-regional organizations to prevent further escalation with possible multidimensional consequences.

We welcome the continued efforts of the

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maritime operation “Aspides” and of the U.S.-led operation “Prosperity Guardian” along with UK and 10 other countries to protect these crucial shipping lanes.

We are concerned by the hindrance to the transit of energy supplies, raw materials and other commodities through the Red Sea. The countries most negatively affected by the Houthis’ attacks include those in the region. Maritime security and navigational rights and freedoms are critical to ensuring free movement of essential commodities to destinations and populations all over the world. This includes delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance to more than half the population of Yemen and to Sudan and Ethiopia.

4. Yemen

We express great concern for the situation in Yemen, notably for the humanitarian conditions of the Yemeni civilian population. Yemeni parties must allow safe, rapid, and unimpeded access to all those in need, halt requirements that restrict women’s freedom of movement and impede delivery of humanitarian aid, and remove obstacles to the delivery of assistance, notably to the most vulnerable. All parties must comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law.

We reiterate our strong support to the United Nations and to

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Special Envoy Hans Grundberg for his efforts to resolve the conflict in Yemen.

We welcome the understanding reached in December 2023 between the Presidential Leadership Council and the Houthis that included a commitment on a set of measures to implement a nation-wide ceasefire and to improve living conditions in the country. We urge all involved parties and in particular the Houthis to engage in good faith in preparations for an inclusive political process in consultation with civil society and under

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auspices.

We call for accountability for human rights violations, including grave violations of children’s rights, and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law.

5. Syria

We remain committed to a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process, in line with

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Security Council resolution 2254, and we fully support the mandate of the

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Special Envoy, Geir O. Pedersen. We call on the Syrian regime to engage meaningfully with the

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-facilitated political process to achieve a peaceful solution to the crisis and national reconciliation. Normalization, reconstruction and lifting of sanctions would only be considered in the framework of a credible inclusive and enduring political process consistent with UNSC resolution 2254. Stability and peace in Syria cannot be achieved without the enduring defeat of Daesh. As members of the Global Coalition against Daesh we are committed to ending Daesh's presence in Syria.

We remain committed to advancing justice for victims and accountability for all actors responsible for violations of international law in Syria, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We reiterate our condemnation of the use that the Syrian régime has made of chemical weapons in Syria. We continue to urge the Syrian regime to comply with its obligations under UNSCR 2118 and the Chemical Weapons Convention and to eliminate its chemical weapons programme completely and verifiably.

We continue to call for the immediate release of all civilians arbitrarily detained and to clarify the fate of those forcibly disappeared. We support the work of organizations such as the Commission of Inquiry and the International Independent and Impartial Mechanism, which document the crimes perpetrated in Syria. We stand ready to support the newly established

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Independent Institution for Missing Persons in Syria.

We will continue to support the Syrian people through humanitarian assistance to meet their needs, including early recovery assistance and measures fostering resilience, and demand that the regime facilitate unhindered humanitarian access to all Syrians, including through

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cross-border humanitarian assistance, for which there is no alternative. We remain grateful to regional countries for continuing to host Syrian refugees, and we call upon the Syrian regime to create the conditions for voluntary, safe, and dignified refugee returns.

The upcoming Eighth Brussels Conference on the Future of Syria and the Region is important in maintaining a high level of engagement and mobilisation of the international

community in this regard.

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