



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

Cape Town, South Africa, 26 April 2023

1. BRICS Deputy Foreign Ministers and Special Envoys on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) met on 26 April 2023 in hybrid format in Cape Town, South Africa, to exchange views on the current situation in the region.
2. They noted that rising global instability and uncertainties have negatively impacted global peace, security and development including in the region. They advocated for the strengthening of the multilateral framework of international relations, while opposing unilateralism and promoting peace, stability and development in the Middle East and North Africa region. They stressed that the regional situation impacts on global security, stability and development. They urged the international community to intensify support for development and peace in the MENA region and to align their support, including resources, to their responses to the resolution of regional conflicts. They stressed the importance of addressing conflict and security concerns through dialogue and inclusive consultations in a coordinated and cooperative manner. A peaceful and prosperous Middle East and North Africa is in the interest of the whole world.
3. They expressed serious concern over continued conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa 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.

4. 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. In this regard, they welcomed the role played by the AU and the leading role of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) in promoting peace, security and stability in North Africa. They advocated for the strengthening of multilateralism as a means to promoting and ensuring peace, stability and development in the MENA region.

5. They stressed that peace and stability in the MENA region requires developmental cooperation and integration. 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.

6. They condemned terrorism and extremism, including violent extremism conducive to terrorism and called on countries of the region to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to terrorism. 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, including violent extremism conducive to terrorism, 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.

7. They emphasised their full support for the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in accordance with the Security Council Resolution 487 (1981), paragraph 14 of the Security Council Resolution 687 (1991) and the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

8. They expressed their deep concern at the deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as a result of continued occupation and the expansion of settlements. They noted with concern that there is neither a proposal being currently discussed for a permanent solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict nor any perspective of resuming negotiations in the foreseeable future. They shared the view that the mere "management of the conflict" does not constitute an acceptable way forward towards peace and stability in the Middle East. They also acknowledged with great regret the current escalation of violence between Israelis and Palestinians, which underscores the pressing need to advance towards a politically just and lasting solution for the conflict. They stressed that the question of Palestine must be resolved through direct negotiations based on International Law. They reaffirmed the position that the two-state solution achieved through such direct negotiations without preconditions remains the internationally recognized basis for the peaceful resolution to the conflict. They reiterated their support for the just cause of the Palestinian people to restore their legitimate rights including but not limited to their right to self-determination. They reaffirmed their call for greater solidarity among all parties of Palestine to achieve internal reconciliation. They encouraged Palestine and Israel to resume peace talks based on a negotiated two-state solution. They called on the international community to intensify its efforts in support of UN-led effort with a view to achieving a comprehensive, lasting and just settlement that allows Israel and Palestine to live side by side in peace, security and stability while recognising the legitimate security needs of Israel and Palestine. They stressed that efforts should be made to leverage respective strengths, actively promote peace talks, and to help Palestine develop its economy, ease its humanitarian situation, and improve its people's welfare. They commended the extensive

work carried out by UNRWA to alleviate the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people. They reiterated the call for the international community to provide developmental assistance to support UNRWA activities to increase its reach amongst the Palestinian community.

9. They stressed that the key to solving the Syrian issue is to follow the principles enshrined in relevant UNSC resolutions, in particular facilitation 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, especially after the earthquake of 6 February, giving priority to people’s livelihoods, and accelerating early recovery projects. They welcomed the rapprochement between Arab countries and Syria as well as the steps towards the Syrian-Turkish normalisation and supported all the efforts conducive to the political resolution of the Syrian issue. They emphasised their continued support for the efforts of the UN Special Envoy for Syria, the work of the Constitutional Committee and the Astana Format.

10. They emphasised their firm support for Lebanon’s efforts to safeguard 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 continuously aid Lebanon without political conditions, to help restore political, social, and economic stability. They encouraged the various political forces in Lebanon to achieve, as soon as possible, a consensus on the election of the next President of the Republic, which is of utmost importance to pave the way for the comprehensive dialogue necessary for the country to overcome the challenges it currently faces.

11. 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 resume the truce and 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 appreciated the positive role of UNSG’s Special Envoy, the Gulf Cooperation

Council (GCC) and all the relevant parties that contributed to a political solution for the conflict. They reiterated their deep concern about Yemen's humanitarian crisis and encouraged the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to Yemen. They welcomed the most recent Saudi initiative to hold direct talks between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis to achieve peace and security in Yemen and the Gulf region. They also welcomed and commended the efforts of regional countries including Saudi Arabia and Oman to address the situation in Yemen and seek permanent ceasefire.

12. They reflected that twenty-years have passed since the invasion of Iraq which has severely impacted the security and development trajectory of the country, its people and the 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 international 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 emphasized the need to achieve an enduring and mutually acceptable political solution to the question of Western Sahara in accordance with relevant UNSC resolutions. They expressed their full support for the implementation of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). They furthermore expressed their full support for the UNSG's Personal Envoy for Western Sahara and his efforts to advance the political process that will result in the resumption of dialogue between the parties concerned.

14. 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 as the main channel. 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. They welcomed the efforts of the African Union, including its High-Level Committee for Libya, in restoring stability and fostering the unification of Libya, and look forward to the outcomes of the inter-Libyan Reconciliation Conference. They reaffirmed their call on all parties to create the necessary conditions for the holding of free and fair elections, based on a sound and agreed constitutional framework.

15. They expressed deep concern about the continued clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces in Sudan. They deeply regret the deaths and injuries of civilians. They urged the parties to reach an immediate ceasefire and stressed the need to respect international and humanitarian law. They encouraged all parties in Sudan to continue dialogue so that the political transition can be achieved, meeting the fundamental interests of the country and the legitimate aspirations of the Sudanese people. They reiterated their support for joint efforts by the UN, AU, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to facilitate dialogue between the Sudanese parties to overcome the current situation, with the support of the international community.

16. They agreed to meet again under Russia's Chairship of BRICS in 2024. 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 (MENA).

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