

【Check Against Delivery】

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR RYUTA MIZUUCHI,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Japan
to the OSCE
on Agenda Item 4: Report on the Activities of the Chairman-in-
Office “Situation in Gaza” Permanent Council, OSCE
19 October 2023**

First of all, I would like to thank the Chair for raising the issue of the increasingly tense situation in Gaza. We recognize the efforts and the role of the Chair and the Governments of the OSCE to work towards leading the international community towards cooperation rather than division and conflict.

Mr. Chair,

Japan also strongly stands against terror and unequivocally condemns the attacks by Hamas and other militants on 7th October with a number of rocket launches and land infiltration into Israeli territories, having caused numerous deaths and injuries, mostly of innocent civilians. Concerning the kidnapping of people by Hamas and other Palestinian militants, Japan strongly condemns such acts and urges the early release of those captives.

At the same time, Japan is deeply concerned about a number of civilian casualties in the Gaza Strip, including those at the attack on the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza City on October 17. Attacks against hospitals or civilians cannot be tolerated on any ground. Japan likewise expresses our sympathy and condolences to the victims and their bereaved families respectively.

Japan urges all the parties to act based on international law, so as to avoid further civilian casualties. Japan will redouble its efforts, in coordination with other countries, to secure the safety of civilians and to calm down the situation as soon as possible.

Mr. Chair,

Japan as current presidency of the G7 has been actively engaging in diplomatic efforts to bring about an early calming of tensions and improve the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, through coordination among the G7 foreign ministers, and talks with Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Iran and others. Prime Minister Kishida also had intensive exchanges with Mrs. Von der Leyen as our EU colleagues are aware. We have also dispatched a special envoy for Middle East peace to Egypt, Jordan and Qatar and are making efforts to reach out to relevant parties, in cooperation with other countries and the international community.

Mr. Chair,

The protection of innocent civilians is utmost important and once again requires all parties to respond in line with international humanitarian law. We call upon all parties and countries concerned for their cooperation to ensure humanitarian access for smooth relief operations so that civilians can receive the assistance they need.

In view of the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, Japan intends to provide US\$10 million in emergency assistance through international organisations to support the civilian population in the Gaza Strip.

I thank you.