STATEMENT BY ANA CRISTINA RODRÍGUEZ, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, CHARGÉ D’AFFAIRES, A.I., OF GUATEMALA TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE OPEN DEBATE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION
22 OCTOBER 2015

Mr. President,

My delegation recognizes the distinguished presence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain, Mr. Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo in this debate, and appreciates the briefing made by the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Jan Eliasson.

Guatemala is extremely concerned about the current situation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territory, Israel and, especially, Jerusalem. This situation has been complicated with the increase in direct clashes between Palestinians and Israeli Security Forces, as with the expansion of settlements and the forced displacement of Palestinians.

Such violence undermines the possibility of a political horizon that meets the legitimate needs of both peoples that will lead to a final and fair settlement. We believe that this can only be achieved through a Palestinian State that coexists in peace with Israel, and not through the commission of violent acts.

It is necessary that any measure that seeks to maintain peace and security in the region take this final goal into account. Walls, checkpoints, violent responses by security forces and the demolition of homes, as well as violent attacks by individuals or groups and the firing of rockets are not actions that promote the solution to this conflict.

The most urgent challenge which is presented to us is to stop the spiral of violence and prevent any further loss of life. We are particularly concerned about repeated provocations that have occurred in the holy sites of Jerusalem, as well as the excessive actions that have been taken in this context. It is necessary for political, community and religious Palestinian and Israeli leaders to stand firm against terrorism, violence and incitement. In this sense, we highlight the rapid response of the Secretary General and his visit to the region to request the parties to cease the violence.

In any case, the current crisis cannot be resolved by adopting safety measures. The continued occupation and the reduced prospects of the Palestinian aspirations for building a State also spreads frustration and despair. In addition, the severe economic situation, including the high unemployment that exists in the area, also exacerbates these feelings. Similarly, the continuing and increasing activity to expand settlements diminishes hope and the potential for a viable Palestinian State. This loss of any political perspective is the most detrimental factor that contributes to the violence we are seeing.
Mr. President,

Only the establishment of a political horizon can break this cycle of violence and fear. We trust that the Security Council will redouble its efforts to create conditions aimed to return to meaningful negotiations.

In this context, we join the different calls that have been made to seek mechanisms that will allow the relaunch of the political process. Similarly, we recognize the value of the principle of shared responsibility, and we consider that active participation of the diplomatic Quartet on the Middle East peace process can generate new momentum for the parties to take responsible steps towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. We also see the benefits of having an expanded Quartet that include other key actors in the region.

We are in a conductive moment to rethink the ways in which we can move forward and conclude the peace talks, which will enable to work on measures that build confidence and promote Palestinian reconciliation, issues that are necessary in order that the parties commit to peace. We cannot sit idly.

However, it shall be the parties, major stakeholders in reaching a mutually satisfactory solution, who must commit to making a real and renewed effort. It is they who shall enhance their confidence and commitment to the option of peace and coexistence of two states, Israel and Palestine, side by side in peace and security.

In conclusion, Guatemala recognizes the enormous challenges that lie ahead, but it is our political and historical responsibility as members of the international community to support those means and efforts to help achieve it.

Thank you.