

Gaza: Urgent and delayed decision of the Security Council



United Nations Security Council

By Elizabeth Borrego Rodriguez

While the escalation in Gaza seems to have no end, the eyes of the planet look today to the UN Security Council, unable to achieve a unanimous rejection against the unleashed violence.

After almost two weeks of conflict and four meetings, the highest security body of the United Nations has not yet issued any draft resolution, despite warnings about the expansion of the conflict that began on October 7.

The only body on the planet in charge of maintaining international peace and security analyzed this week two drafts elaborated, first by Russia and then by Brazil, to demand a cease-fire.

However, both failed in their first attempts.

Last Monday, Russia presented its proposal with an express call for a humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza.

The draft, which was also backed by China, the United Arab Emirates, Gabon and Mozambique, did not gather the necessary nine votes within the 15-member body.

The representations of the United States, United Kingdom, France and Japan opposed the text, while Albania, Brazil, Ghana, Malta, Switzerland and Ecuador abstained.

Moscow's permanent representative to the UN, Vasily Nebenzya, lamented the outcome and the "selfish intentions of the bloc of Western countries."

"This is the only reason why (the Council) could not send a clear, forceful and collective message aimed at reducing tension; we are talking about the most serious explosion of violence in recent decades," he stressed.

The whole world was waiting with great expectation that the Security Council would take measures to put an end to the bloodshed but the delegations of the Western countries have basically trampled on those expectations, the Russian diplomat emphasized.

For her part, the US representative, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, justified her country's position with the absence in the text of a condemnation of the Hamas group, which she described as "terrorist".

Two days later, the United States vetoed another draft prepared by Brazil that called for humanitarian pauses for the entry of aid to the Gaza Strip.

The U.S. ambassador said the decision was due to the absence of any mention of "Israel's right to self-defense".

Thomas-Greenfield also recalled that President Joe Biden remained in Israel, so any diplomatic action within the body would have to wait.

The decision, strongly criticized, wrecked the second option a day after hundreds of Palestinians were killed following the attack on the Al-Ahli hospital.

The meetings seem to confirm the warnings about the divisions within the Security Council and the need for reform, but the urgency of the conflict demands immediate answers.

The solution could lie in the presentation of a third draft or within the 78th General Assembly, chaired by Dennis Francis, in a vote or a formal meeting of the member states.

According to the organization itself, urgent global discussions can lead to collective action.

"In the case of an ongoing conflict, such action can include helping to stop the bloodshed, establishing a ceasefire and alleviating the suffering of civilians on the ground," the UN specifies on its website.

In the meantime, UN efforts are focused on good offices, appeals to allow vital aid into besieged Gaza and the work of humanitarian agencies on the ground.

On Thursday, Secretary-General António Guterres traveled to Egypt to raise his two urgent demands: the release of hostages held by Hamas and the crossing of trucks carrying humanitarian cargo.

Civilians in Gaza are in desperate need of basic services and supplies, and this requires rapid and unimpeded access, he stressed.

"We need food, water, medicine and fuel now, we need them on a large scale and we need them to be sustained," he added. We know that the longer this goes on, the greater the risk of violence spilling over, he warned.

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