

**Address by Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru
at the Eightieth Session of the United Nations General Assembly
New York, 23 September 2025**

(Provisional Translation)

1. Introduction

Madame President, Excellencies,

For what purpose does the United Nations convene us here, today?

Is the United Nations currently fulfilling the role that is expected of it?

Eighty years ago, the United Nations was established to serve as the core of a new international order based on collective security.

The First World War was the first total war in history. The League of Nations was established to prevent its recurrence. However, it failed to prevent the Second World War. In light of this failure, The United Nations was founded, primarily by the victorious nations, with the aim of protecting international peace and security.

But now, 80 years later, we must ask whether the current United Nations is really fulfilling the role it was originally expected to play. Are its functions being carried out to the fullest extent?

2. The Birth of the United Nations – Peace and Security

Madame President,

Peace and security are never a given. Peace and security can only be achieved through proactive efforts.

The most important purpose of the United Nations, as stipulated in the UN Charter, is to maintain international peace and security, and the primary

responsibility for this rests with the Security Council. The five countries that played a leading role in the establishment of the UN were given special rights, a permanent seat on the Council and veto power, thereby granting them special responsibilities as well. The Charter also made provisions for the establishment of a UN force under the authority of the Security Council. Furthermore, after considering that there could be situations where the Security Council fails to function properly, the right of individual or collective self-defense of each country was recognized.

However, in many critical cases, the Council was unable to take the necessary decisions due to the veto power granted to the permanent members. It goes without saying that the Member States have drawn on their wisdom to develop a variety of innovative mechanisms.

In 1950, the General Assembly passed the resolution "Uniting for Peace," thereby empowering the General Assembly to take action. In the context of the Suez uprising of 1956, the ceasefire was established after the parties involved — including the UK and France, who are permanent members of the Security Council — accepted the resolution at the emergency special session of the UN General Assembly. It also created peacekeeping operations. In the Gulf War, a Security Council resolution authorized the use of force by Member States.

Since 2022, a permanent member of the Council who exercised the veto is requested to speak at the General Assembly.

Despite these efforts, the Security Council is still not functioning effectively.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine is the most obvious example. A permanent member of the Security Council with a special responsibility for international peace and security has invaded its neighbor. This shakes the very foundation of the international order. Security Council resolutions are vetoed and not adopted, and General Assembly resolutions calling on Russia to withdraw immediately are adopted, but not implemented. Russia continues its aggression against Ukraine, interpreting Article 51 of the UN

Charter in a self-righteous way, and labelling its aggression as a right of collective self-defense. This calls to mind the “Prague Spring” in 1968. Article 51 of the Charter must never be used arbitrarily.

The veto was an unavoidable safety valve designed to prevent direct conflict between the major powers. However, the inherent limitations of the UN are clear.

Madame President,

Looking back at the progress of the UN, it is clear that now is the time to be decisive in carrying out the reform of the Security Council.

It is necessary to expand both permanent and non-permanent membership categories. Although the number of Member States has increased fourfold, the number of permanent members has remained unchanged since its establishment. Simply increasing the number of Security Council members is not enough. However, I believe it is possible to make the Security Council more representative without reducing its effectiveness.

When increasing the number of Security Council members, we must also consider the veto power held by the permanent members.

As the G4, we propose freezing the veto power of new permanent members for 15 years.

Expanding the Security Council and addressing the challenges the UN faces with greater legitimacy would make it a better organization, or suffice it to say, it would be a 'better' organization than it is now.

In last year's 'Pact for the Future', we, the leaders of the United Nations Member States, recognized the urgent need to reform the Security Council and declared to the world that we would intensify efforts for reform. So, how much progress have we made in the discussions over the past year? We have a responsibility to accelerate discussions and reach a conclusion on Security Council reform as soon as possible. Member States cannot afford to drag

each other down over how to expand the membership of the Security Council. We must be acutely aware that innocent lives are being lost even at this very moment as I am delivering my speech. We must rebuild responsible global governance. We must decisively implement Security Council reform. Japan strongly urges the international community to take action.

Madame President,

There was a time when the end of the Cold War brought hope that peace would be realized worldwide. However, this hope was short-lived. Ethnic conflicts flared up, as exemplified during the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia. There were terrorist attacks in New York City. When the United Nations was founded in 1948, today's situation was unimaginable: a non-state actor possessing the same destructive power as a state.

Territory, ethnicity, religion and economic disparities. These sources of conflict are not going to disappear. In fact, they are becoming increasingly acute in an international society that is becoming more and more multipolar. What role should the United Nations play in this challenging environment?

Madame President,

The situation surrounding Palestine has reached an extremely serious and alarming juncture that threatens to undermine the very foundation of a "two-state solution", which the international community has long sought, and which Japan has consistently supported.

The recent expansion of the Israeli ground operations in Gaza City will further aggravate the already dire humanitarian crisis in Gaza, including famine. Japan condemns these actions, which are entirely unacceptable in the strongest possible terms. We call for their immediate cessation. I feel strongly indignant by the statements made by senior Israeli government officials that appear to categorically reject the very notion of Palestinian state-building.

We must never overlook the unimaginable hardships the people of Gaza

are facing. Japan has consistently supported the lives and dignity of the people of Gaza through humanitarian assistance, including the medical treatment of the wounded in Japan. We will continue to make every possible effort.

There was indeed a time when Jews and Arabs lived together in peace for centuries. The terror inflicted by Hamas and the devastation in Gaza we are witnessing today have left many feeling deeply saddened. Since the Oslo Accords, the international community has made significant progress toward achieving coexistence of the two states, and these efforts must not be allowed to collapse.

For our country, the question is not whether to recognize a Palestinian state, but when. The continued unilateral actions by the Government of Israel can never be accepted. I must state clearly that if further actions are taken that obstruct the realization of a two-state solution, Japan will be compelled to take new measures in response. What matters the most is that Palestine can exist in a sustainable manner, living side by side in peace with Israel. Japan will continue to play a realistic and proactive role in moving even a single step closer toward the goal of a two-state solution.

As we invite Palestine to assume its role as a responsible member of the international community, the Palestinian side must establish a system of governance that ensures accountability. As affirmed in the General Assembly resolution of 12 September, we call on Hamas to release the hostages immediately, and hand over its weapons to the Palestinian Authority.

We are fully aware of the domestic and international calls on Japan. Now, Japan will strongly support Palestinian state-building, that is, the establishment of economic independence and effective governance. Japanese assistance established the Jericho Agro-Industrial Park in the West Bank. Currently, 17 Palestinian companies employ more than 300 local people and export value-added products, such as supplements food and medical products made from processed olives.

A state cannot function without highly competent public servants who

have a strong sense of duty. To date, Japan has provided training to more than 7,000 Palestinians with the aim of strengthening the capability of public officials over the last 27 years. We will continue to actively support the development of human resources in Palestine to shun any corruption.

In promoting these efforts, we will collaborate with our colleagues in Southeast Asia, including Muslim countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia. Japan launched a framework for this in 2013 and has continued to lead ever since.

Japan strongly supports the initiative to promote lasting peace and stability across the entire Middle East region by expanding the Abraham Accords. These accords bear the name of the common spiritual ancestor of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. While it is extremely disappointing that progress towards the implementation of the agreement has stalled over the past two years, we strongly believe that their value will never be diminished.

Madame President,

A permanent member of the Security Council is openly making nuclear threats. I am deeply concerned that the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons may be lowered, which would introduce new uncertainties to the effectiveness of nuclear deterrence. We must address the issue of nuclear weapons head on.

We are fully aware of the domestic and international calls on Japan to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as the only country to have suffered atomic bombings.

However, we must maintain a world without nuclear war and also realize a world without nuclear weapons. To this end, the NPT, which brings together both nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states, is the most effective and realistic framework. Japan calls on the international community to embrace the spirit of dialogue and cooperation, so that next year's NPT Review Conference will be a success and so that the world will move one step closer to achieving a world without nuclear weapons.

For Japan, which has been placed in an extremely severe security environment concerning nuclear weapons, extended deterrence provided by the United States, including nuclear deterrence, remains necessary to protect the lives and properties of our citizens. We cannot take a position that rejects deterrence theory. This is the reality of implementing a responsible security policy. Yet, the nuclear catastrophe our nation has experienced must never be repeated.

While it is a historical fact that Hiroshima was the first place to suffer from atomic bombings, whether Nagasaki will remain the last place to suffer from atomic bombings, depends on the continuous efforts and wisdom of mankind.

Many people around the world are likely to associate atomic bombings with the image of the mushroom cloud in the photo taken from the air right after the bombings. But what actually happened beneath that mushroom cloud in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 80 years ago?

On August 6, I attended the Peace Memorial Ceremony in Hiroshima where I introduced a “tanka” or short Japanese poem.

"These big bones
Must be the teacher's:
Around them,
Gathering in a circle,
Little skulls are found."

This is a poem written by the poet Ms. Shinoe Shoda, which is inscribed on "the Monument of the A bombed Teachers and Students of National Elementary Schools" located near the epicenter of the atomic bombing. In the midst of the blazing fire, the students relied desperately on their teachers. The teacher was not able to protect those students. This poem evokes their grief.

The lives and the futures of many civilians were lost in an instant.

Even those who survived have suffered for a long time from the health hazards of radiation. This suffering continues to this day, 80 years later. I strongly hope that world leaders, as well as young people who will shape the future, will visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki to understand the realities of the atomic bombings.

Madame President,

It is North Korea that is now challenging these efforts towards a "world without nuclear weapons" head-on. Its nuclear and missile development poses a grave threat to international peace and security. We strongly urge the full implementation of the numerous Security Council resolutions aimed at achieving the complete denuclearization of North Korea.

Additionally, there is the issue of Japanese citizens having been abducted by North Korea. With the aging of the abductees and their families, the abductions issue is a humanitarian and time sensitive- issue with no time to spare.

Japan seeks to normalize its relationships with North Korea, in accordance with the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration, through comprehensively resolving outstanding issues of concern, such as the abductions, nuclear and missile issues, as well as settlement of the unfortunate past. This policy remains unchanged.

Japan will continue to call for dialogue with North Korea. We strongly ask for the continued understanding and cooperation of the international community.

3. Development

Madame President,

The role of the United Nations extends beyond the notion of “security” in the narrow sense. Actions taken by the United Nations in the economic and social spheres are also vital in achieving international peace and security.

Japan has continued to place importance on the concept of “Human security”, which focuses on the individual and calls to protect human dignity. Japan does not seek specific economic interests or military footholds through its aid. We simply hope to laugh together, cry together, and work side by side with all the nations of the world. This is the core principle of Japan’s international cooperation.

With this determination, I hosted the ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in Yokohama last month. Since its inception in 1993, Japan has remained steadfast in its commitment to supporting Africa’s ownership in addressing its challenges. At this year’s Conference, we successfully launched our joint initiative to co-create innovative solutions to the challenges Africa is facing, leveraging Japan's technology and expertise.

We also launched the “Economic Region Initiative of Indian Ocean-Africa” with a view to stimulate trade and investment between Africa and the Indian Ocean region as well as to promote Africa's regional integration. In promoting this initiative, we will also cooperate closely with India. Japan will continue to make every effort to realize a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)'.

4. Conclusion

Madame President,

No country can forge the path to a bright future unless it squarely faces history. We must never again repeat the devastation of war. On the anniversary of the war’s end this August, I renewed my vow to engrave that in my heart.

Many of the generation that experienced the second World War in human history, that divided the international community, are no longer playing central role in many countries. The international community is once again heading toward division and confrontation, such as in Ukraine and the Middle East where many lives are lost every day, and in East Asia, where

Japan is located. The security of these regions is closely interrelated. The free and open international order based on the rule of law that we have strived for is facing unprecedented challenges.

I would like to make a strong plea. In the face of these challenges, it is crucial that we continue to nurture and protect our healthy and robust democracy.

I am not taking the position that the spread of democracy alone will bring peace to the world. We reject totalitarianism, irresponsible populism, and narrow-minded nationalism. We do not tolerate discrimination or exclusion. I believe that a healthy and robust democracy plays a vital role in maintaining and strengthening a free and open international order, and in promoting international peace and security.

This is founded on the courage and integrity to squarely face the past, and on fostering a sense of human rights, healthy discourse, including mission-driven journalism, and classical liberalism that values the tolerance of listening humbly to the arguments of others.

Madame President,

Seventy years have passed since the Bandung Conference, which brought Asian and African nations together for the first time to advocate for world peace and cooperation. This was also the first large-scale international conference that Japan participated in since the war ended.

The people of Asia showed a spirit of tolerance in accepting Japan after the war. They must have had unfathomable emotional struggles in doing so. Still, supported by this spirit of tolerance and under the pledge never to wage a war again, Japan has been striving to realize everlasting world peace.

Through my discussions with the leaders of the Republic of Korea, China, and Southeast Asian countries, I am once again convinced of the need to further promote future-oriented relations and have shared this conviction with the leaders of these countries.

Over the past year, I have visited various countries in Asia and Latin America and met with numerous heads of state and government in Japan. This brings my total of such occasions to 90 countries and four international organizations. During these meetings, I often felt that countries around the world consider Japan an essential part of the international community. I hope that Japan will continue to be sought after by the rest of the world. That is my earnest wish.

Please join us in calling for:

Reform of the Security Council as soon as possible;

A “world without nuclear war” and a “world without nuclear weapons”;

A world that can overcome global challenges together;

and, Solidarity and tolerance, not division and confrontation.

Japan will continue to move forward alongside the international community. We will never waver, and we will continue to lead the way. It is with this determination that I would like to conclude my statement.

Thank you for your attention.