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PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

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I. Secretary-General strongly condemns attack by Hamas

On 7 October, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres made the following [statement](#).

The Secretary-General condemns in the strongest terms this morning's attack by Hamas against Israeli towns near the Gaza Strip and central Israel, including the firing of thousands of rockets towards Israeli population centres.

The attacks have so far claimed numerous Israeli civilian lives and injured many hundreds. The Secretary-General is appalled by reports that civilians have been attacked and abducted from their own homes.

The Secretary-General is deeply concerned for the civilian population and urges maximum restraint. Civilians must be respected and protected in accordance with international humanitarian law at all times.

The Secretary-General extends his deepest condolences to the families of the victims and calls for the immediate release of all abducted persons.

The Secretary-General urges all diplomatic efforts to avoid a wider conflagration.

He stresses that violence cannot provide a solution to the conflict, and that only through negotiation leading to a two-State solution can peace be achieved.

II. UN Human Rights Chief appalled at reports of attacks by Palestinian armed groups against Israel

On 7 October, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk made the following [statement](#).

I am shocked and appalled at reports this morning that hundreds, possibly thousands, of indiscriminate rockets have been fired by Palestinian armed groups towards Israel, and that at least 22 Israelis have been killed and hundreds injured. I am also deeply concerned at reports that Israeli civilians have been taken hostage.

This attack is having a horrific impact on Israeli civilians. Civilians must never be the target of attack. I note also that Israeli forces have responded with air strikes into the densely populated Gaza Strip, reportedly killing at least two people. I call on them to take all precautions to avoid civilian casualties there.

I call for an immediate stop to the violence, and appeal to all sides and key countries in the region to de-escalate to avoid further bloodshed.

III. UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process vehemently condemns attacks by Hamas militants

On 7 October, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, issued the following [statement](#).

I vehemently condemn this morning's multi-front assault against Israeli towns and cities near the Gaza Strip, and barrage of rockets reaching across central Israel by Hamas militants.

These events have resulted in horrific scenes of violence and many Israeli fatalities and injuries, with many believed to be kidnapped inside the Strip. These are heinous attacks targeting civilians and must stop immediately.

I am deeply concerned for the well-being of all civilians. I am in close contact with all concerned to urge maximum restraint and call on all sides to protect civilians.

This is a dangerous precipice and I appeal to all to pull back from the brink.

IV. WFP sounds alarm on food security, urges immediate humanitarian access

On 8 October, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) issued the following [statement](#).

ROME – The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is deeply concerned by the rapidly deteriorating situation in Israel and the State of Palestine and the impact of this conflict on the affected populations.

As the conflict intensifies, civilians, including vulnerable children and families, face mounting challenges in accessing essential food supplies, with food distribution networks disrupted and food production severely hampered by hostilities.

WFP urges safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to affected areas, calling on all parties to uphold the principles of humanitarian law, taking every necessary measure to safeguard the lives and well-being of civilians, including ensuring access to food.

WFP is prepared to respond swiftly with pre-positioned food stocks for people who have been displaced or are in shelters, when the situation allows, as well as resuming its regular food and cash-based transfer assistance to vulnerable people.

While most shops in the affected areas in Palestine currently maintain one month of food stocks, this risk being depleted swiftly as people stock up in fear of a prolonged conflict. Frequent electricity cuts bring the threat of food spoilage.

WFP is closely monitoring the availability and prices of food items and other commodities among its network of 300 local shops and working closely with local bakeries to provide fresh bread and support the local economy.

WFP has been steadfast in providing crucial food assistance, serving approximately 350,000 Palestinians monthly, and extending aid to nearly one million Palestinians in collaboration with other humanitarian partners through its cash-based transfers platform.

These developments follow a devastating cut in assistance for 60 percent of WFP food aid recipients since June 2023, due to funding shortfalls, leaving only 150,000 people receiving reduced rations.

V. UNICEF Executive Director on deteriorating situation for children

On 9 October, the Executive Director of UNICEF Catherine Russell made the following [statement](#).

Nothing justifies the killing, maiming or abducting of children – grave rights violations which UNICEF wholeheartedly condemns.

Yet less than 72 hours after the outbreak of horrific violence in Israel, reports indicate that grave rights violations against children are rampant. Many children have been killed or injured, while countless others have been exposed to the violence.

UNICEF calls on armed groups, or those responsible, for the immediate and safe release of any children being held hostage in Gaza so that they can be reunited with their families or caregivers. And we call on all parties to protect children from harm, in accordance with international humanitarian law.

I am also deeply concerned about measures to block electricity and prevent food, fuel and water from entering Gaza, which may put the lives of children at risk.

It is imperative that all parties refrain from further violence and attacks on civilian infrastructure.

With the humanitarian situation rapidly deteriorating, humanitarian actors must be able to safely access children and their families with lifesaving services and supplies – wherever they may be.

I remind all parties that in this war, as in all wars, it is children who suffer first and suffer most.

VI. UN Humanitarian Coordinator for OPT on the hostilities between Palestinian armed groups and Israel

On 10 October, the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Lynn Hastings made the following [statement](#).

Palestinian armed groups infiltrated Israel on 7 October, killing and capturing hundreds of Israeli civilians and members of the Israeli forces while indiscriminately firing thousands of rockets into Israel.

On 8 October, the Government of Israel declared war, launching intensive air strikes into the densely populated Gaza Strip over the past three days. Hundreds of Palestinians have been killed and over two thousand now injured. The magnitude of the ongoing hostilities has led to grave humanitarian consequences. Homes, schools, medical facilities, and other infrastructure have been damaged and destroyed.

In Gaza, at least 200,000 of the 2.2 million residents, have been displaced after fleeing for fear of their lives or their houses were destroyed by airstrikes. Most of them are taking shelter in UNRWA schools, at least two of which have already been damaged by airstrikes in the area. The numbers of those affected by the hostilities are only expected to increase.

Israeli authorities have cut their water supply to Gaza, reducing an already scarce availability of potable water. And in accordance with the complete siege ordered by the Israeli Government on Gaza, access to electricity, food, and fuel have also been severed, inevitably worsening the already dire humanitarian situation. Palestinians in Gaza now only have electricity to 3-4 hours per day. This hinders the ability of health facilities to function and treat those injured.

The United Nations and its humanitarian partners in the Occupied Palestinian Territory are working to meet acute needs, in particular shelter, in dangerous circumstances. However, access for humanitarian staff and supplies into Gaza has also been cut and the intensity of the hostilities is limiting the ability of staff to deliver aid.

As the security and humanitarian situations continue to escalate, all parties must comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law.

All military and armed groups must abide by the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution when conducting their operations.

Civilians, especially children, medical facilities, humanitarian personnel health workers, and journalists must be protected.

Captured civilians must be released immediately and unconditionally.

Anyone captured or detained, including combatants, must be treated humanely and with dignity.

All relevant actors must allow humanitarian teams and goods to immediately and safely reach the hundreds of thousands of people in need.

VII. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights urges states to defuse “powder keg” situation in Israel and OPT

On 10 October, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk issued the following [statement](#).

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk on Tuesday issued an urgent plea to all States with influence to take steps to defuse the “powder keg” situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. He stressed that international humanitarian law and international human rights law must be respected in all circumstances.

“We are faced with an explosive powder keg situation. We know how this plays out, time and time again — the loss of Israeli and Palestinian lives and incalculable suffering inflicted on both communities,” said Türk.

“All parties must respect international humanitarian law. They must immediately cease attacks targeting civilians and attacks expected to cause disproportionate death and injury of civilians or damage to civilian objects.”

The High Commissioner said he was “deeply shocked and appalled by allegations of summary executions of civilians, and, in some instances, horrifying mass killings by members of Palestinian armed groups.”

“It is horrific and deeply distressing to see images of those captured by Palestinian armed groups being ill-treated, as well as reports of killings and the desecration of their bodies,” he said. “Civilians must never be used as bargaining chips.”

“I call on Palestinian armed groups to immediately and unconditionally release all civilians who were captured and are still being held. The taking of hostages is prohibited by international law,” the High Commissioner said.

Türk stressed that it is vitally important that everyone deprived of their liberty in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel is treated humanely. People’s dignity and lives must be respected.

Information gathered by the UN Human Rights Office indicates that Israeli air operations have also hit large residential towers in Gaza City and other residential buildings across Gaza, schools and premises of the UN relief and works agency, UNRWA, resulting in civilian casualties.

“International humanitarian law is clear: the obligation to take constant care to spare the civilian population and civilian objects remains applicable throughout the attacks,” Türk said. The principles of distinction and the prohibition of indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks are paramount.

On 9 October, the Israeli authorities ordered a “full siege” of Gaza, shutting off electricity, water, food and fuel supplies. This risks seriously compounding the already dire human rights and

humanitarian situation in Gaza, including the capacity of medical facilities to operate, especially in light of increasing numbers of injured.

“The imposition of sieges that endanger the lives of civilians by depriving them of goods essential for their survival is prohibited under international humanitarian law,” the High Commissioner said. Any restrictions on the movement of people and goods to implement a siege must be justified by military necessity or may otherwise amount to collective punishment.

The Human Rights Chief expressed deep concern at how hate speech and incitement to violence have surged since Saturday, fuelling anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in the region and globally.

“We know from bitter experience that vengeance is not the answer, and ultimately innocent civilians pay the price,” Türk said.

“The world cannot afford more polarisation. We need to find solutions guided by the full respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law.”

VIII. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs urges to uphold the laws of war

On 10 October, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths made the following [statement](#).

The scale and speed of what’s unfolding in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel is bone chilling.

Hundreds of Israelis have been killed and thousands have been injured. Scores are being held captive, facing appalling threats to their lives. Thousands of indiscriminate rockets have been launched into Israel.

In densely populated Gaza, hundreds of Palestinians have been killed and thousands have been injured in intense bombing. Homes, health centres and schools sheltering displaced families have been hit. The whole city is now under a siege order.

My message to all sides is unequivocal: The laws of war must be upheld.

Those held captive must be treated humanely. Hostages must be released without delay.

Throughout hostilities, civilians and civilian infrastructure must be protected. Civilians must be allowed to leave for safer areas.

And humanitarian relief and vital services and supplies to Gaza must not be blocked.

The whole region is at a tipping point.

The violence must stop.

IX. Twenty-six UN human rights experts deplore attacks on civilians, call for truce and urge international community to address root causes of violence

On 12 October, Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967; Pedro Arrojo Agudo, Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation; Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing; Aua Baldé (Chair-Rapporteur), Gabriella Citroni (Vice-Chair), Angkhana Neelapaijit, Grażyna Baranowska, Ana Lorena Delgadillo Pérez, Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances; Reem Alsalem, Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences; Mama Fatima Singhateh, Special Rapporteur on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children; Morris Tidball-Binz, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Ian Fry, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of Human Rights in the context of Climate Change; Javaid Rehman, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran; Siobhán Mullally, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; Ashwini, K.P, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; Tomoya Obokata, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences; Fernand de Vareennes, the Special Rapporteur on Minority issues; Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on the protection and promotion of freedom of opinion and expression; Mary Lawlor, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Dorothy Estrada Tanck (Chair), Ivana Radačić (Vice-chair), Elizabeth Broderick, Meskerem Geset Techane and Melissa Upreti, Working Group on discrimination against women and girls; Farida Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on the right to education; Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker, Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea; Clément Nyaletsossi Voule, Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; Attiya Waris, Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights; Vitit Muntarbhorn, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia; Barbara G Reynolds (Chair), Bina D'Costa, Catherine S. Namakula, Dominique Day, Miriam Ekiudoko, Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent; Isha Dyfan, Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia; Alexandra Xanthaki, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; José Francisco Calí Tzay, Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples; Richard Bennett, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan; Obiora C. Okafor, Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity; David Boyd, Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment; Livingstone Sewanyana, Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order; Alice Jill Edwards, Special Rapporteur on Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; Muluka-Anne Miti-Drummond, Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism; Ravindran Daniel (Chair-Rapporteur), Sorcha MacLeod, Chris Kwaja, Carlos Salazar Couto, Working Group on the use of mercenaries; Surya Deva, Special Rapporteur on the right to development, and Ms. Paula Gaviria Betancur, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons issued a statement reflected in the following [press release](#).

UN independent experts today unequivocally condemned targeted and deadly violence directed at civilians in Israel and violent and indiscriminate attacks against Palestinian civilians in Gaza and a further tightening of the unlawful blockade, which will have devastating impacts on the whole civilian population.

“We strongly condemn the horrific crimes committed by Hamas, the deliberate and widespread killing and hostage-taking of innocent civilians, including older persons and children. These actions constitute heinous violations of international law and international crimes, for which there must be urgent accountability,” the experts said.

“We also strongly condemn Israel’s indiscriminate military attacks against the already exhausted Palestinian people of Gaza, comprising over 2.3 million people, nearly half of whom are children. They have lived under unlawful blockade for 16 years, and already gone through five major brutal wars, which remain unaccounted for,” they said.

“This amounts to collective punishment,” the UN experts said. “There is no justification for violence that indiscriminately targets innocent civilians, whether by Hamas or Israeli forces. This is absolutely prohibited under international law and amounts to a war crime.”

The experts also expressed concern about reports that journalists and media workers reporting on the conflict had been targeted, with seven Palestinian journalists and media workers reportedly killed in Israeli airstrikes.

At dawn on 7 October 2023, Palestinian armed groups from Gaza fired more than 5,000 rockets indiscriminately towards Israel and breached the heavily fortified Gaza barrier to launch ground attacks in multiple locations in Israel. The attacks indiscriminately targeted both civilians and security forces. Hamas stated that its actions were taken in response to Israel’s continuous violence against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank including east Jerusalem. More than 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals, the majority of whom were civilians, were reportedly killed, and more than 3,000 wounded. Reports suggest that more than 100 Israelis and foreign nationals, including children and older persons, and some known human rights defenders, have been taken hostage in Gaza by Hamas.

“Taking hostages in the context of hostilities constitutes a war crime. The civilians taken by Hamas must be immediately released, pending which their fate and whereabouts must be disclosed,” the UN experts said.

As a result of the Israeli attacks against Gaza, by air, land and sea, at least 1,100 Palestinians have been killed, including older persons and 290 children, and more than 5,000 injured. The airstrikes appear to have targeted densely populated areas, including markets, two hospitals, destroyed residential buildings and damaged 20 United Nations Reliefs and Works Agency (UNRWA) facilities, including schools sheltering displaced civilians. As of 11 October, the UN estimated that at least 340,000 people have been displaced within Gaza, and nearly 218,600 people are sheltering in 92 UNRWA schools across the Gaza Strip.

“Indiscriminately killing civilians in the context of hostilities, with no regard for the principles of distinction, precaution and proportionality, is a war crime,” the experts said.

They also stressed that indiscriminate rocket attacks, bombing of civilian infrastructure and shelling densely populated areas constitute grave breaches of international humanitarian law, whether committed by Palestinian armed groups or by Israeli Defence Forces.

On 9 October, the Israeli Defence Minister announced that authorities would completely cut essential supplies to Gaza, stating they are fighting “human animals.” The Minister threatened to bomb those attempting to provide humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. On 9 and 10 October, Israel reportedly bombed the Rafah crossing at the Gaza-Egyptian border, disrupting movement in and out of Gaza, rendering the crossing closed and the enclave completely blockaded.

“Besides this appalling language that dehumanises the Palestinian people, especially those who have been unlawfully “imprisoned” in Gaza for 16 years, we condemn the withholding of essential supplies such as food, water, electricity and medicines. Such actions will precipitate a severe humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where its population is now at inescapable risk of starvation. Intentional starvation is a crime against humanity,” the experts said.

The experts reminded the international community of its responsibilities to address the root causes of the current conflict, including the 56-year-old occupation and the annexation pursued by Israel. They urged the international community to identify viable paths to prevent further violations of international law, human suffering, and bloodshed.

A peaceful solution is imperative in view of the dehumanising language that is increasingly being used against both Palestinians and Israelis, the experts said.

“As the civilian death toll from the violence mounts, we call for an immediate de-escalation of tensions in the region and an effective response by the international community premised upon international law and the protection of equal rights and dignity of all,” they said.

In the short term, the experts urged:

1. An immediate end to violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, in particular the right to life. To this effect, support the investigation launched by the Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, into all violations reported since 7 October, including unlawful deaths and enforced disappearances, and the investigation by the International Criminal Court;
2. The agreement of a ceasefire, to be monitored by an independent, international body;
3. The release of hostages taken by Hamas and Palestinians arbitrarily detained by Israel, particularly women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities and those who are gravely ill;
4. The establishment of an international protective presence in the occupied Palestinian territory;
5. The provision of all necessary financial and humanitarian aid and the creation of humanitarian corridors that allow people to leave Gaza and return as soon as the hostilities cease; and
6. The dignity of the dead from the latest violence be respected and that they are swiftly handed over to mourning relatives.

“Breaking the cycle of violence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory is paramount,” the experts said. “Armed attacks and military responses have already proven incapable of leading to security and respect for human rights of all. Restoring international legality, accountability and respect for humanity and dignity of all must prevail, including an end to Israel’s 56 years of military occupation.”

X. Special Rapporteur on human rights of internally displaced persons calls on Israel to rescind evacuation order for northern Gaza

On 13 October, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons Paula Gaviria Betancur issued a statement reflected in the following [press release](#).

A UN expert today demanded that Israel immediately rescind its order for 1.1 million Palestinians to leave northern Gaza within 24 hours, condemning the evacuation order as a crime against humanity and a blatant violation of international humanitarian law.

“Forcible population transfers constitute a crime against humanity, and collective punishment is prohibited under international humanitarian law,” said Paula Gaviria Betancur, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons.

“We are horrified at the prospect of an additional 1 million Palestinians joining the over 423,000 people already forcibly driven from their homes by the violence over the past week,” she said.

“It is inconceivable that more than half of Gaza’s population could traverse an active war zone, without devastating humanitarian consequences, particularly while deprived of essential supplies and basic services,” said Gaviria Betancur.

Shortly before midnight, the Israeli military informed the United Nations that the entire population of Gaza, north of Wadi Gaza, should relocate to southern Gaza within 24 hours, including UN staff and those sheltered in UN facilities.

“The humanitarian system in Gaza is already at breaking point. Gaza’s infrastructure has been devastated by indiscriminate bombardments from air, land and sea, and those currently displaced have nowhere to go,” the expert said.

“Tripling the displaced population overnight will decimate and permanently alter the civilian population of Gaza,” she warned.

The Special Rapporteur said that humanitarian actors in Gaza were facing an overwhelming rise in needs against a backdrop of attacks on healthcare facilities and health workers, threats against humanitarian workers, and a draconian siege that has cut off access to water, fuel, medicine, electricity, communications, and essential humanitarian supplies.

“More than two-thirds of internally displaced persons are sheltering in UNRWA schools which are not fit for this purpose, and have themselves been bombarded. Over 1,400 Palestinians have been killed and more than 6,000 have been injured since 7 October, leaving hospitals overwhelmed,” she said.

“Because there is no conceivable way for hospitals to evacuate the most serious cases, the WHO has called the evacuation order an effective ‘death sentence’ for the sick,” added Gaviria Betancur added.

Recalling the earlier statement from a group of UN experts, she urged Israel to adhere to international law.

“I would like to remind Israel that observance of international law is compulsory, not optional, during any conflict,” the expert said.

“To that end, I call for the strict respect of international humanitarian law and its provisions, including unrestricted humanitarian access to those in need, the cessation of indiscriminate attacks against civilians, and an end to forced displacement of populations and blockade,” she said.

XI. Secretary-General urges Israel to reconsider its Gaza evacuation order

On 13 October, Secretary-General António Guterres published the following [op-ed piece](#) in The New York Times.

Thursday night’s order by the Israel Defence Forces to Palestinians in Gaza to evacuate their homes within 24 hours was dangerous and deeply troubling. Any demand for a mass evacuation on extremely short notice could have devastating humanitarian consequences.

The evacuation order applies to approximately 1.1 million people. It applies to a territory that is already besieged, under aerial bombardment and without fuel, electricity, water and food. It applies to a territory that has suffered critical damage to roads and infrastructure in the past week, making the act of evacuating nearly impossible in the first place. It applies to United Nations staff members and more than 200,000 people sheltering in U.N. facilities, including schools, health centres and clinics. It applies to hundreds of thousands of children: Nearly half of Gaza is under the age of 18.

As secretary general of the United Nations, I appeal to Israeli authorities to reconsider.

We have approached a moment of calamitous escalation, and find ourselves at a critical crossroads. It is imperative that all parties — and those with influence over them — do everything possible to avoid fresh violence or spillover of the conflict to the West Bank and the wider region.

We urgently need a way out of this disastrous dead end before more lives are lost.

There are several key priorities to focus on right now in order to pull the world back from this abyss. The United Nations and our partners need rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access now throughout Gaza. Humanitarian aid including fuel, food and water must be allowed to enter.

All hostages in Gaza must be released. Civilians must not be used as human shields.

International humanitarian law — including the Geneva Conventions — must be respected and upheld. Civilians on both sides must be protected at all times. Hospitals, schools, clinics and United Nations premises must never be targeted. I mourn my colleagues in Gaza who have

already lost their lives in the last week. And still, United Nations personnel are working nonstop to support the people of Gaza. We will continue to do so.

I have been in constant contact with leaders in the region. It is clear that the ongoing upheaval in the Middle East is polarizing communities around the world, widening divides, and spreading and amplifying hate. If truth is the first casualty of war, reason is not far behind.

I am horrified to hear the language of genocide entering the public discourse. People are losing sight of each other's humanity. Brutality and violence cannot be allowed to obscure a fundamental truth: We are all the product of our lived realities and collective history.

The Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset put it this way: “Yo soy yo y mi circunstancia” — “I am myself and my circumstances.” And sometimes, those circumstances are unbearable.

When I put myself in the shoes of an Israeli Jew, I experience the recent horrors in the context of two millennia of discrimination, expulsion, exile and extermination, leading to the Holocaust. During the 15th century, my own country of Portugal expelled or forcibly converted its Jewish community and after a period of discrimination, they were forced to leave. As an Israeli Jew, I would be painfully aware that some in our neighbourhood do not recognize Israel's right to exist.

And if today, as an Israeli Jew, I see young people massacred at a concert, grandmothers shot in their homes in cold blood, and scores of civilians, including children, brutally abducted and held at gunpoint, it is only natural for me to feel enormous pain, insecurity and, yes, blind fury.

Then I try to consider the circumstances across the divide: if I were a Palestinian living in Gaza. My community has been marginalized and forgotten for generations. My grandparents may have been forced to leave their villages and homes. If I'm lucky, my children have already survived several wars that flattened their neighbourhoods and killed their friends.

As a Palestinian, I have nowhere to go and no political solution in sight. I see the peace process essentially ignored by the international community, with ever more settlements, ever more evictions, and endless occupation. It is only natural for me to feel an enormous sense of pain, insecurity and again, blind fury.

Clearly, the grievances felt by the Palestinian people do not justify the terror that was unleashed against civilians in Israel. I once again utterly condemn the abhorrent attacks by Hamas and others that terrorized Israel.

And clearly, the horrific acts by Hamas do not justify responding with collective punishment of the Palestinian people.

But any solution to this tragic, decades-long ordeal of death and destruction requires full recognition of the circumstances of both Israelis and Palestinians, of both their realities and both their perspectives.

We cannot ignore the power and the pull of collective memory; the circumstances that shape and define our identity and our very essence.

Israel must see its legitimate needs for security materialized, and Palestinians must see a clear perspective for the establishment of their own state realized, in line with United Nations resolutions, international law and previous agreements. If the international community truly believes in these two objectives, we need to find a way to work together to find real, lasting solutions — solutions that are based on our common humanity and that recognize the need for people to live together, despite histories and circumstances that tear them apart.

Ortega y Gasset’s quotation concludes: “Y si no la salvo a ella, no me salvo yo.” (“If I don’t save my circumstances, I cannot save myself.”)

This horrifying cycle of ever-escalating violence and bloodshed must end. It is clear that the two sides in this conflict cannot achieve a solution without concerted action and strong support from us, the international community. That is the only way to save any chance of security and opportunity for both Israelis and Palestinians.

XII. UNICEF calls for an immediate humanitarian pause and safe access to scale up lifesaving services for children

On 13 October, UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell issued a statement reflected in the following [press release](#).

Hundreds of thousands of children and their families have started fleeing northern Gaza today ahead of imminent larger-scale attacks. It follows days of bombardments of Gaza after the brutal attacks of 7 October. Nearly a week into the war, hundreds of children have been reportedly killed, and thousands more reportedly injured.

UNICEF is calling for an immediate ceasefire as 1.1 million people—nearly half of them children—have been warned to move out, ahead of what is expected to be a widescale military assault into one of the most densely populated places on earth.

Children and families in Gaza have practically run out of food, water, electricity, medicine and safe access to hospitals, following days of hostilities and cuts to all supply routes.

“The situation is catastrophic, with unrelenting bombing and a massive increase in the displacement of children and families. There are no safe places,” said UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell. “An immediate ceasefire and humanitarian access are the top priorities to allow much needed aid to children and families in Gaza. We need an immediate humanitarian pause to ensure unhindered and safe access to children in need, no matter who they are or where they are. There are rules of war. Children in Gaza need lifesaving support and every minute counts.”

Homes and critical infrastructure lie in ruin, and over 423,000 people have already fled their homes. Some have taken shelter in schools or hospitals, with some of the schools damaged in

attacks. Gaza's two main hospitals, already running out of fuel and overflowing with injured civilians, have also been warned to move patients and staff south in just hours.

Right now, there is practically no way out of Gaza for the civilian population.

UNICEF staff have continued to respond to the critical needs of children across the Gaza Strip, but access is becoming increasingly difficult and dangerous. Humanitarians have also been warned to move out of Gaza city, but UNICEF staff will stay in southern Gaza to continue to provide support for children in need.

UNICEF has distributed nearly all its prepositioned supplies, and worked to keep the only functioning desalination plant in the entire Gaza Strip running in much-reduced capacity. The plant provides safe water for 75,000 people, but without fuel, it could come to a halt soon. Medical supplies and medicines have also been provided to hospitals, but given the number of injuries, hospital beds and essential medicine—including anaesthetics—are quickly running out.

“A child is a child. Children everywhere must be protected at all times and must never come under attack,” said Russell. “We reiterate the United Nations Secretary-General’s call to rescind the order for over one million Palestinian civilians to leave northern Gaza and to take all possible steps to provide their safety and protection. Every child deserves no less.”

XIII. UNRWA Commissioner-General urges protection of civilians across the Gaza Strip

On 13 October, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) Philippe Lazzarini made the following [statement](#).

As Gaza remains under heavy bombardment with Israel tightening its grip over the overpopulated Strip, it is left to the UN and humanitarians to protect civilians.

The call from Israeli Forces to move more than 1 million civilians living in northern Gaza within 24 hours is horrendous. This will only lead to unprecedented levels of misery and further push people in Gaza into the abyss.

Since 7 October, over 423,000 people have already been displaced. Of them, more than 270,000 have taken refuge in UNRWA shelters, where basic food, medicine and support is provided to retain dignity and a glimmer of hope.

The scale and speed of the unfolding humanitarian crisis is bone-chilling. Gaza is fast becoming a hell hole and is on the brink of collapse.

There is no exception, all parties must uphold the laws of war; humanitarian assistance must be provided at all times to civilians.

In Gaza, more than 2 million people are caught up in this conflict. UNRWA is struggling to fulfil its mandate.

I urge all parties and those with influence over them to put an end to this tragedy and provide immediate and unconditional humanitarian access and protection to the civilians, among them far too many women and children.

The time for humanity to prevail is now.

XIV. UN Women condemns the attacks on civilians in Israel and OPT

On 13 October, the following [statement](#) was issued by UN Women.

UN Women condemns the attacks on civilians in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories and is deeply alarmed by the devastating impact on civilians including women and girls.

We reiterate the UN Secretary-General's call to all parties to ensure the safety of civilians and civilian infrastructure. International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law must be respected and upheld.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza was dire before these hostilities and has now severely worsened. This exacts unjustifiable and specific costs on women and girls. The demand to immediately relocate 1.1 million people from northern Gaza, while the entire territory is under siege, is extremely dangerous.

We reiterate the Secretary-General's call today for unrestricted access for humanitarian actors into Gaza, including the United Nations, to provide aid to the most affected. This is essential to address the desperate, immediate needs of women and children, including to food, water, and protection. We also join in his call for the immediate release of hostages.

UN Women has been supporting Palestinian women since 1997 to achieve their social, economic, and political rights. We remain present on the ground to provide support and assistance and will do so for as long as it takes.

XV. UN Human Rights Chief urges Israel to ensure full respect for international law in military operations

On 13 October, Ravina Shamdasani, the Spokesperson for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk issued the following [statement](#).

We continue to follow, with deepening horror, the desperate situation for civilians in Gaza and in Israel.

As we have stressed, civilians must never be used as bargaining chips. Yet, we continue to receive heart-breaking messages of helplessness from people in Gaza, who are moving from house to house, terrified, seeking elusive safety. And civilians continue to be held hostage by Palestinian armed groups – in clear violation of international humanitarian law. We call, again, for their humane treatment and their immediate and unconditional release.

More than 2,700 people, including civilians, have already been killed in both Israel and Gaza. We urge Palestinian armed groups to halt the use of inherently indiscriminate projectiles, which violate international humanitarian law, as well as attacks directed against civilians. And we urge Israel to ensure full respect for international humanitarian and human rights law in any and all military operations. Air strikes and artillery strikes have already led to the destruction of large parts of densely populated neighbourhoods in Gaza, and rhetoric from high-level officials raises concerns that a message is being sent to the members of the Israeli Defence Forces that international humanitarian law has become optional rather than compulsory. It is absolutely crucial that Israeli leaders make it unambiguously clear that military operations must be conducted in full compliance with international law.

Israeli authorities announced a few hours ago that the entire population of Gaza north of Wadi Gaza should relocate to southern Gaza. This order is affecting more than a million Palestinians, including children, older and sick people, forcing them to relocate with little or no transport and with scant guarantees for their safety, amidst continuing hostilities. We echo the Secretary-General's Spokesperson's call for this to be rescinded, avoiding a calamitous situation.

International humanitarian law grants special protection for specifically protected persons and objects, including medical personnel, medical units, medical transport, humanitarian relief personnel and objects, as well as cultural property. The parties to the conflict must respect and protect them in all circumstances.

The “complete siege” announced by Israel is already leading to a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, with estimates that more than 250,000 people in Gaza have already been displaced, the only power station ceasing to operate and a serious shortage of water. No fuel, food, water or medical supplies are being allowed in, placing the entire population of Gaza at risk. Such collective punishment of civilians is strictly prohibited by international law.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk urges all States to insist upon and assist the parties to the conflict in immediately implementing a humanitarian corridor to ensure safe and unimpeded access to humanitarian aid. We should not look back and regret that we did not do everything in our power to avoid a disaster.

In many countries around the world, there has also been a proliferation of anti-Semitic and Islamophobic hate speech. The High Commissioner deeply deplores this. We call on political and other leaders to speak out, unequivocally, against such speech, and to take clear measures to stem any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. This is a time for the international community to come together in solidarity, advocating for the protection of all civilians, no matter where, no matter what.

As the High Commissioner stressed this week in the UN General Assembly, it is of the utmost importance that an urgent solution is found to the 56-year-old conflict. We are at the disposal of both Israelis and Palestinians to do what we can to help the region break from this vicious cycle of bloodshed, hatred and polarization. The violence must stop.

XVI. UNRWA Commissioner-General warns that more than 2 million people across Gaza are at risk as water runs out

On 14 October, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Philippe Lazzarini, issued the following [statement](#).

Across the Gaza Strip, more than 2 million people are at risk as water runs out.

“It has become a matter of life and death. It is a must; fuel needs to be delivered now into Gaza to make water available for 2 million people,” said Philippe Lazzarini, UNRWA Commissioner-General.

No humanitarian supplies have been allowed into Gaza for a week now.

Clean water is running out in the Gaza Strip, after its water plant and public water networks stopped working. People are now forced to use dirty water from wells, increasing risks of waterborne diseases. Gaza has also been under an electricity blackout since 11 October, impacting the water supply.

At the UN base in the southern Gaza Strip – where UNRWA has moved its operations- drinking water is also running out. Thousands of people have sought refuge there after Israel issued a warning to residents demanding them to leave their homes in the northern parts of the Strip.

Only in the past 12 hours, hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced. The exodus continues as people move to the southern parts of the Gaza Strip. Nearly 1 million people have been displaced in one week alone.

“We need to truck fuel into Gaza now. Fuel is the only way for people to have safe drinking water. If not, people will start dying of severe dehydration, among them young children, the elderly and women. Water is now the last remaining lifeline. I appeal for the siege on humanitarian assistance to be lifted now,” added Lazzarini.

XVII. Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in OPT warns of new instance of mass ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, calls for ceasefire

On 14 October, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Francesca Albanese issued a statement, reflected in the following [press release](#).

“The situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel has reached fever pitch,” said Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967.

“The United Nations and its Member States must intensify efforts to mediate an immediate ceasefire between the parties, before we reach a point of no return,” said Albanese. “The international community has the responsibility to prevent and protect populations from atrocity crimes. Accountability for international crimes committed by Israeli occupation forces and Hamas must also be immediately pursued,” she said.

Since 7 October 2023, more than 1,900 Palestinians have been killed, including at least 600 children, more than 7,600 injured, and over 423,000 people have been displaced as a result of the Israeli strikes. This fate befell a population which has already experienced five major wars since 2008 in the context of an unlawful blockade imposed by Israel since 2007, which Albanese said has been widely condemned by the international community as collective punishment.

On 12 October, Israeli forces issued an order for 1.1 million Palestinians in north Gaza to move to the south within 24 hours, amidst ongoing airstrikes. The next day, Israeli forces reportedly began to enter Gaza in order to “clear” the area. Palestinians have no safe zone anywhere in Gaza, with Israel having imposed a “complete siege” on the tiny enclave, with water, food, fuel and electricity unlawfully cut off. Rafah, the only border crossing that remained partially open to the Gaza strip, was closed after damage caused by Israeli airstrikes.

“There is a grave danger that what we are witnessing may be a repeat of the 1948 Nakba, and the 1967 Naksa, yet on a larger scale. The international community must do everything to stop this from happening again,” the UN expert said. She noted that Israeli public officials have openly advocated for another Nakba, the term for the events of 1947-1949 when over 750,000 Palestinians were expelled from their homes and lands during the hostilities that led to the establishment of the State of Israel. The Naksa, which led to Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967, displaced 350,000 Palestinians.

“Israel has already carried out mass ethnic cleansing of Palestinians under the fog of war,” the expert said. “Again, in the name of self-defence, Israel is seeking to justify what would amount to ethnic cleansing.

“Any continued military operations by Israel have gone well beyond the limits of international law. The international community must stop these egregious violations of international law now, before tragic history is repeated. Time is of the essence. Palestinians and Israelis both deserve to live in peace, equality of rights, dignity and freedom,” Albanese said.

XVIII. Under-Secretary-General for humanitarian affairs pleads: humanity must prevail

On 14 October, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths made the following [statement](#).

Civilians in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory are suffering from a week of utter anguish and devastation. I fear that the worst is yet to come.

In Israel, families are reeling from the horror of last Saturday's attack. More than a thousand people have been killed and many more have been injured. Over 100 people are held captive.

In Gaza, families have been bombed while inching their way south along congested, damaged roads, following an evacuation order that left hundreds of thousands of people scrambling for safety but with nowhere to go.

Nearly 2,000 people have been killed and many more have been injured.

There is no power, no water and no fuel. Food supplies are running dangerously low.

Hospitals, overwhelmed with patients, are running out of medicine.

Morgues are overflowing.

Homes, schools, shelters, health centres and places of worship are under intense bombardment.

Entire residential neighbourhoods have been razed to the ground.

Aid workers have been killed.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza, already critical, is fast becoming untenable.

In the West Bank, violence is on the rise, with a surge in civilian deaths and injuries. Families are facing ever greater movement restrictions.

And in Lebanon, the risk of the conflict spilling into the country is a major concern.

The parties' actions and rhetoric over the past few days are extremely alarming and unacceptable.

Even wars have rules, and these rules must be upheld, at all times, and by all sides.

Civilians and civilian infrastructure, including humanitarian workers and assets, must be protected.

Civilians must be allowed to leave for safer areas. And whether they move or stay, constant care must be taken to spare them.

Essential supplies and services and unimpeded humanitarian access must be allowed.

Anyone held captive must be treated humanely. All hostages must be released.

All countries with influence must exert it to ensure respect for the rules of war and to avoid any further escalation and spillover.

The past week has been a test for humanity, and humanity is failing.

XIX. Secretary-General warns that Gaza is running out of water, electricity and other essential supplies

On 15 October, the Secretary-General António Guterres made the following [statement](#).

In this dramatic moment, as we are on the verge of the abyss in the Middle East, it is my duty as Secretary-General of the United Nations to make two strong humanitarian appeals.

To Hamas, the hostages must be immediately released without conditions.

To Israel, rapid and unimpeded access for humanitarian aid must be granted for humanitarian supplies and workers for the sake of the civilians in Gaza.

Gaza is running out of water, electricity and other essential supplies. The United Nations has stocks available of food, water, non-food items, medical supplies and fuel, located in Egypt, Jordan, the West Bank and Israel. These goods can be dispatched within hours. To ensure delivery, our selfless staff on the ground, along with NGO partners, need to be able to bring these supplies into and throughout Gaza safely, and without impediment to deliver to those in need.

Each one of these two objectives are valid in themselves. They should not become bargaining chips and they must be implemented because it is the right thing to do.

XX. Security Council fails to adopt resolution calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire

On 16 October, the Security Council met to consider the “Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question” ([S/PV.9439](#)). It considered a draft resolution ([S/2023/772](#)) co-sponsored by Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela, Yemen

and Zimbabwe, reproduced below. The draft resolution failed to be adopted due to the failure to garner the required number of votes.

The Security Council,

Recalling all its relevant resolutions on the situation in the Middle East,

Expressing grave concern at the escalation of violence and the deterioration of the situation, in particular the resulting heavy civilian casualties; and emphasizing that the Israeli and Palestinian civilian population must be protected,

Expressing grave concern at the deepening humanitarian crisis in Gaza,

Recalling that a lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be achieved by peaceful means,

1. *Calls* for an immediate, durable and fully respected humanitarian ceasefire;
2. *Strongly condemns* all violence and hostilities directed against civilians and all acts of terrorism;
3. *Calls* for the secure release of all hostages;
4. *Calls* for the unimpeded provision and distribution of humanitarian assistance, including of food, fuel and medical treatment, as well as creating conditions for the safe evacuation of civilians in need;
5. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

XXI. The Bureau of Palestinian Rights Committee condemns killing and wounding of civilians in Gaza and calls for an immediate ceasefire

On 17 October, the Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) issued the following [statement](#).

The Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People strongly condemns the killing and wounding of civilians and the targeting of civilian infrastructure in the Gaza Strip. It expresses grave concern at the humanitarian disaster being imposed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian civilian population.

It calls on the international community to put aside divisions and uphold the political, legal, humanitarian and moral obligations invoked by this dangerous crisis. The international community must act with urgency for an immediate ceasefire, to deliver humanitarian assistance to all those in need, and for a just and peaceful resolution to the conflict, which has been too long delayed.

International humanitarian law is unequivocal about the need to protect civilians and persons under occupation and during armed conflict. The current escalation in Gaza, coming after decades of denying the rights of the Palestinian people, has already broken the limits of international law and is providing ample evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Ongoing indiscriminate and collective punishment, military attacks on densely populated areas as well as against hospitals, places of worship, and schools where civilians seek refuge are war crimes under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The rapidly rising casualty toll, with thousands of civilians killed and wounded, including women and children, and the deliberate deprivation of food, water, electricity and medicines to the over 2.3 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are shocking and unjustifiable, constituting grave breaches of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law.

There is no military solution to this conflict. Only a solution that recognizes the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and freedom, can bring peace and security to the Palestinian and Israeli peoples.

The Bureau appeals to everyone to work for an immediate ceasefire to halt the violence and bloodshed, to halt the evacuation orders and the forced displacement of traumatized civilians, and to ensure safe and unimpeded access for the delivery of humanitarian aid and medical assistance to civilians and protected persons. It calls on the International Criminal Court to dispatch an urgent fact-finding mission to the region to investigate potential war crimes and crimes against humanity.

XXII. Secretary-General condemns fatal attacks on Al Ahli Anglican episcopal hospital, UNRWA school in Gaza

On 17 October, the Secretary-General António Guterres made the following [statement](#).

The Secretary-General condemns the strike this evening on Al Ahli Anglican Episcopal Hospital in Gaza, with preliminary reports of hundreds killed and many others wounded, including women and children.

He also condemns the attack on an UNRWA [United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East] school earlier today in Al-Maghazi refugee camp in Gaza which killed at least six people.

The Secretary-General extends his sincere condolences to the families of the victims and wishes a swift recovery to those injured.

He emphasizes that hospitals, clinics, medical personnel and UN premises are explicitly protected under international law.

XXIII. UN Human Rights High Commissioner declares those found responsible for horrific killings at Al Ahli hospital must be held to account

On 17 October, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk made the following [statement](#).

Words fail me. Tonight, hundreds of people were killed – horrifically – in a massive strike at Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City, including patients, healthcare workers and families that had been seeking refuge in and around the hospital. Once again, the most vulnerable. This is totally unacceptable.

At least six people were also killed this afternoon when an UNRWA school was hit in Al-Maghazi refugee camp, in Gaza’s middle area. The school had been serving as a shelter for some 4,000 seeking refuge.

Hospitals are sacrosanct, and they must be protected at all cost.

We don’t yet know the full scale of this carnage, but what is clear is that the violence and killings must stop at once.

All States with influence must do everything in their power to bring an end to this horrendous situation. Civilians must be protected, and humanitarian aid must be allowed to reach those in need as a matter of urgency.

Those found responsible must be held to account.

XXIV. UNICEF Executive Director horrified by the reported deaths and injuries of children and women at Al Ahli hospital

On 17 October, UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell made the following [statement](#).

I am horrified by the reported deaths and injuries of children and women following an attack on the Al Ahli Hospital in the Gaza Strip this evening. While details are still emerging and bodies are still being counted, the scenes on the ground are devastating.

This underscores the deadly impact this ongoing war is having on children and families. In just 11 days, hundreds of children have tragically lost their lives – not including today’s deaths – and thousands more injured, and over 300,000 children displaced from their homes.

Attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, such as hospitals, are unacceptable and must cease now. UNICEF reiterates its urgent plea for an immediate cessation of hostilities, ensuring the protection of children from harm and facilitating the safe and timely access of humanitarian aid to children in need.

Every child everywhere deserves peace.

XXV. Special Rapporteur on the right to health urges immediate ceasefire and humanitarian access as Gaza health sector reaches “breaking point”

On 17 October, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to health, Tlaleng Mofokeng made a [statement](#) reflected in the following press release.

“All parties to the conflict and their international partners must ensure swift and unimpeded access to essential humanitarian supplies, including food, water and medicine, fuel, and electricity,” said Tlaleng Mofokeng, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to health. “Gaza’s medical infrastructure has been irreparably damaged and healthcare providers are working in a dire situation with limited access to medical supplies and conditions that do not allow them to provide timely and quality healthcare,” Mofokeng said.

“Humanitarian workers, physicians, civil society, human rights organisations and journalists continue to work in the region while under bombardment themselves,” the expert said.

The World Health Organization has documented more than 111 attacks on health care services in the occupied Palestinian territory, including 48 attacks on the Gaza Strip which resulted in the death of at least 12 health workers.

Mofokeng said that Israel was preventing the entry of essential supplies into Gaza, including food, water, fuel, medicines, medical disposables and equipment. “The Gaza Strip is experiencing continuous bombardment and massive devastation,” she said. “The health sector in the enclave is at a breaking point.”

Mofokeng called on the international community to intervene immediately to prevent the escalation of conflict and protect and respect the right to health of all, by demanding access through humanitarian corridors, protection of the healthcare infrastructure and health workers. Palestinian families require urgent supplies of food, water, shelter, fuel, emergency health care, psychosocial support and psychological first aid, the expert said.

The latest escalation and display of aggression in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory must not be de-contextualized, the expert urged. It represents a crushing moment of ongoing gross structural, systemic and sustained violence experienced by Palestinians every day since the occupation, she said. “I call for an immediate ceasefire and for Member States to stop beating the drums of war,” Mofokeng said.

“The Palestinian people have been displaced for more than 75 years. The occupied Palestinian territory has been under military occupation for more than 56 years – an occupation entailing a lack of accountability, ongoing displacement and demolition, movement restrictions, and systematic racial discrimination,” she said.

The Special Rapporteur recalled that UN Member States had reaffirmed their commitment to upholding the sovereign equality of all States and respect for their territorial integrity and political independence, recognising 2019 to 2028 as the “Nelson Mandela Decade of Peace.” The declaration supports a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace by preventing conflict and addressing its root causes, she said.

“Steps to realising the right to self-determination of Palestinians is linked to their dignity and sovereignty,” Mofokeng said. “You cannot extinguish the human desire for freedom.”

XXVI. WHO strongly condemns the attack on Al Ahli hospital

On 17 October, the World Health Organization issued the following [statement](#).

WHO strongly condemns the attack on Al Ahli Arab Hospital in the north of the Gaza Strip. The hospital was operational, with patients, health and care givers, and internally displaced people sheltering there. Early reports indicate hundreds of fatalities and injuries.

The hospital was one of 20 in the north of the Gaza Strip facing evacuation orders from the Israeli military. The order for evacuation has been impossible to carry out given the current insecurity, critical condition of many patients, and lack of ambulances, staff, health system bed capacity, and alternative shelter for those displaced.

WHO calls for the immediate active protection of civilians and health care. Evacuation orders must be reversed. International humanitarian law must be abided by, which means health care must be actively protected and never targeted.

XXVII. 4,200 people killed, over one million displaced in just 10 days – Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

On 17 October, the Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, Ravina Shamdasani made the following [statement](#).

With a staggering 4,200 people killed, over one million people displaced in just 10 days, and large areas in the Gaza Strip reduced to rubble, we have grave fears about the toll on civilians in the coming days. Military operations show no signs of abating, the continued siege on Gaza is affecting water supply, food, medicine and other basic needs, and there are daily indications of violations of the laws of war and international human rights law.

The death toll includes a large number of women and children, as well as at least 11 Palestinian journalists, 28 medical staff and 14 UN colleagues. It remains unclear how many more bodies may be buried in the rubble – with many families missing loved ones, terrified about their uncertain fate.

With numerous health facilities hit by bombardment and others beyond breaking point, there are serious concerns about the accessibility of medical care for the many thousands injured – and for the estimated 50,000 pregnant women, as well as people with chronic physical and mental health issues. The current hostilities are compounding already limited enjoyment of the right to health resulting from the ongoing blockade of Gaza. Attacks against medical facilities, medical personnel and the wounded and sick are prohibited under international humanitarian law.

Appalling reports that civilians attempting to relocate to southern Gaza were struck and killed by an explosive weapon must be independently and thoroughly investigated, as must all allegations of serious violations of international humanitarian law.

We urge the Israeli forces to avoid targeting civilians and civilian objects or conducting area bombardments, indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks, and to take precautions to avoid, and in any event to minimize, loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects.

Those who managed to comply with the Israeli authorities' order to evacuate are now trapped in the south of the Gaza Strip, with scant shelter, fast-depleting food supplies, little or no access to clean water, sanitation, medicine and other basic needs.

So far, around 400,000 IDPs are sheltered in various locations, several in UNRWA buildings. International law requires that any lawful temporary evacuation by Israel, as the occupying power, of an area on the basis of the security of the population or imperative military reasons must be accompanied by the provision of proper accommodation for all evacuees, undertaken under satisfactory conditions of hygiene, health, safety and nutrition. There appears to have been no attempt by Israel to ensure this for the 1.1 million civilians ordered to move. We are concerned that this order combined with the imposition of a “complete siege” on Gaza may not be considered as lawful temporary evacuation and would therefore amount to a forcible transfer of civilians – in breach of international law.

We echo the UN call for a humanitarian pause to enable aid delivery and to prevent further suffering and deaths of the already much beleaguered civilian population of Gaza. Urgent immediate, unimpeded humanitarian access needs to be ensured.

The latest reports indicate that around 199 Israeli are held hostages by Palestinian armed groups in Gaza. And once again, we urge Palestinian armed groups to immediately and unconditionally release all civilian hostages, and to halt the use of inherently indiscriminate projectiles against Israel.

We are also concerned at increased violence in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Since 7 October, 52 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank by Israeli security forces, and five more have been killed by settlers. We urge Israeli authorities to ensure that Israeli security forces refrain from the use of live ammunition except as a last resort to address an imminent threat to life or serious injury and we urge them to take immediate steps to end settler violence against Palestinians and to ensure the protection of the Palestinian population.

Every effort must be made to ensure the strict compliance by all parties to the laws of war in the conduct of hostilities and the treatment of civilians and persons hors de combat, and to ensure that life-saving humanitarian assistance is able to reach civilians in the Gaza Strip to prevent further unnecessary loss of life.

XXVIII. UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process briefs Security Council

On 18 October, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland [briefed](#) the Security Council. The text of the briefing is below.

The Secretary-General and I have briefed this Council extensively in private over the last days on details of the horrific and unprecedented events that have been unfolding, relaying our utter condemnation, shock and regret. I will not repeat my briefings here today, noting that I will report on the situation next week during my regular monthly briefing. My colleague Martin [Griffiths] will brief you on the humanitarian situation.

Today I want to update you on where we are and on my efforts over the last days to find a way to bring to an end the hostilities and spare lives of civilians.

I have to be very honest here now and say that this is one of the most difficult moments facing the Israeli and Palestinian people in the past 75 years. The massacre and despicable acts of violence and terror perpetrated by Hamas against Israelis on 7 October are seared into our collective memories, whole families killed, women and children, abducted to the Strip and held up until this day. There is no justification or excuse for such acts, and I condemn them unequivocally.

We are facing a devastating and clearly difficult challenge for the region and for the international community. It comes at a moment when the global institutions we need to respond to such a crisis are already overstretched.

We are in a war and wars are filled with horrific scenes of violence and tragedy.

Last night, I watched in horror and in real time, as I am sure all of you did, as reports of mass casualties emerged from what should be a protected site, shielded from danger, a place of healing. Hundreds of Palestinians were killed – patients and those seeking shelter – when the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza City was struck by lethal fire. The circumstances of this catastrophe and responsibility still needs to be clarified and we will need a fact-based, full and broad investigation, but the result of all this is very clear Mr. President. It is a terrible tragedy for all those who were involved.

I fear that we are at the brink of a deep and dangerous abyss that could change the trajectory of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, if not of the Middle East as a whole.

After more than a century of conflict and over half-a-century of occupation, we, the international community, have failed, collectively, to bring the parties to a just, sustainable political resolution. The longstanding fissures run deep and extend well beyond the confines of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The events of the past 11 days have served to re-ignite grievances and re-animate alliances across the region.

Based on my meetings and the dynamics I have observed on the ground, I will say the following: The risk of an expansion of this conflict is real, very very real, and extremely dangerous.

Since the outbreak of the current hostilities, it has been my absolute priority to work to diminish this existential threat. With the Secretary-General, I have been in constant communication with the broadest range of interlocutors – with the parties, with regional and international actors who have agency or influence. I continue to do so.

Today, I speak with you from Doha, where the authorities have assured me of their continued commitment to the Palestinian people and their humanitarian needs and the urgency to prevent any further loss of civilian lives.

Meetings and ongoing discussions with leaders in Egypt have focused not only on the question of facilitating access through Rafah Crossing of humanitarian assistance, but also on our shared concerns and efforts to rein in further regional hostilities. I will return to Cairo tomorrow to join the Secretary-General to continue these political discussions. In this regard, we welcome President el-Sisi's swift call for a Summit of world leaders to continue these discussions.

I also had similar discussions with leaders in Lebanon and in Jordan, as well as on repeated phone calls with the P5 and other key regional and international partners who are seized of and actively engaged on addressing this conflict. We are all seeking a common understanding and approach at this critical time.

I welcome the visits of world leaders, such as German Chancellor Scholz, UK Foreign Minister Cleverly and, today, the visit by U.S. President Biden.

With the parties on the ground in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Ramallah, my message has remained steadfast, that we must not let the dynamic of the current conflict take our eyes off what I will call, the day after. The day after we need to start working on now, immediately.

We all know the way forward.

These days, I can tell you, diplomacy is very hard, but here is what we need to do. We need the time and space to achieve two urgent objectives: Hamas' immediate, unconditional release of all hostages; secondly, and fast, unrestricted access of humanitarian aid for Palestinians in Gaza.

The third thing must be collective efforts to end the hostilities and prevent any further expansion of the conflict in the region. Regarding the West Bank and Lebanon there should be no miscalculation, no provocation and no step that closes the door to our current efforts.

The step beyond must be down the path towards a political solution.

Ultimately, the only way to bring an end to the bloodletting and prevent any recurrence is to pave a way towards a long-term political solution, in line with UN resolutions, international law and previous agreements.

As I have stated many times in this Council, a patchwork of ad hoc and temporary fixes, and perpetual management of conflict without addressing underlying issues is not sustainable. That has been proven over the last 11 days. What we are seeing on the ground now, all too tragically proves this to be true.

What we must do now is to work together as one to achieve these objectives.

XXIX. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs briefs the Security Council

On 18 October, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths [briefed](#) the Security Council.

Thank you very much for inviting me, and what I was saying was what an honour it is for me to be on the same podium as [UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process] Tor Wennesland].

And I associate myself profoundly with every single word that he has said, which is born out of years of relevant experience, including not just looking at the horrors of the last 11 days, but anxiously looking ahead at the horrors to come, so all credit to Special Coordinator Tor Wennesland.

But I also, of course, join him and all members of the Council in expressing my horror and despair at the explosion that he described watching, as so many of us did, at the Al Ahli Anglican Episcopal Hospital in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday evening.

My heartfelt condolences, of course, go out to the grieving families affected by this heart-wrenching tragedy, and I also extend my sincerest wishes for a swift and complete recovery to all those who have been injured.

According to the World Health Organization, the hospital in question was one of 20 in northern Gaza subject to the announcement by the Israeli authorities that civilians should leave for their safety. It's a terrible thought, to think of that the morning after.

However, evacuation for many had simply not been possible due to insecurity – as we have been discussing in this chamber this afternoon – the critical condition of many of the patients, and indeed, the lack of ambulances, staff and capacity in the rest of the health system, which as you know, Mr. President, is on its knees in Gaza.

When that hospital was hit, it was fully operational. And indeed, it had reached its maximum capacity. It was, therefore, overflowing with patients, including women and children. Dozens of health care providers and caregivers, demonstrating their extraordinary, frankly extraordinary, courage and commitment to remain sur place, remain there to do their duties and to remain steadfast by their patients' sides, and they were also in the building.

And the hospital was also hosting numerous internally displaced people who either had nowhere else to go or were sheltering there in the expectation, or at least perhaps the hope, that it would provide safety.

And they were wrong. So far, reports indicate hundreds of fatalities, hundreds of civilians and health care workers – and I associate myself with [Special Coordinator] Tor [Wennesland]'s call for a fact-based inquiry to find out how this happened.

Here, I want to say one thing of the highest importance to all of us in the humanitarian community and those of us – all of us, indeed – who are governed by the rules of war and international humanitarian law.

What happened on the 7th of October in the invasion into Israel and the taking of those hostages, still taken and hidden away in Gaza, was simply wrong, against the law, unconscionable, unacceptable. Their unconditional release is an essential component of any return to the kind of normalcy that [Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations] Lana [Nusseibeh] was describing to us earlier before this session started.

Since the 7th of October, 28 health workers in Gaza have reportedly been killed, 23 have been injured. There's no lack of courage. There's no lack of commitment in that population. There have been many reports of health facilities sustaining extensive damage – indeed, the hospital itself had already been struck, as you know, on the 14th of October.

Gaza's health services, as I've been hearing here in Cairo this last day or two, are being overwhelmed by the extreme challenge of meeting the healthcare needs of the rising number of wounded patients, all the while facing significant shortages of medical supplies, water and fuel.

And the destruction of that hospital yesterday heaped further pressure on this crumbling, this failing, this sad health care system. Not only were the victims rushed to Shifa Hospital, one of the many other hospitals in Gaza on the verge of collapse, but it also now deprives Gaza of a facility that cared for more than 45,000 patients a year before the current hostilities.

So, I am compelled to reiterate – and this will not surprise anybody, as everyone else has done on many occasions in this Council – that under international humanitarian law, there are simple requirements. There are simple rules of war, which are applied to all of us, whatever the provocation, and God knows there has been provocation.

Parties to armed conflict must protect civilians and civilian objects, take constant care to spare them from any attack. We have discussed this in almost every other conflict in this chamber around the world – this one is no different.

International law affords specific protection to medical personnel and facilities to ensure the wounded and sick receive the medical care they need. It was no coincidence that one of the first humanitarian leaders on the scene after those events of the 7th of October was our dear friend and leader, Dr. Tedros [Adhanom Ghebreyesus], of WHO.

It's imperative that the wounded and the sick receive the medical care they need. It is imperative that the parties respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, and it is our collective responsibility – we are all involved in this, we are not observers, we are all involved – in using all our influence to ensure that this is the case.

This tragedy is characteristic of the crushing impact this conflict has had on civilians – and as [Special Coordinator] Tor [Wennesland] has been pointing out, and [Ambassador] Lana [Nusseibeh] earlier – the catastrophic consequences it will have if it continues to escalate as we fear.

In just 11 days since that storming of Israel by Palestinian armed groups on the 7th of October, the death toll, as has been mentioned, has already exceeded that of the 2014 hostilities, which lasted more than seven weeks. The pace of death, of suffering, of destruction, of breaches of international law cannot be exaggerated.

In Gaza, more than 3,000 people have been killed. More than 12,500 injured. Hundreds are unaccounted for under the rubble, and quite frankly, we do not know how many have moved from the north to the south to get out of harm's way.

The death toll also, we all know this well, includes humanitarians. I want to pay tribute to the 15 UNRWA [United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East] staff, and Red Cross and Red Crescent personnel that I've been meeting these days, families of those who have fallen.

We estimate that maybe up to a million people have fled their homes to other parts of Gaza, but we don't really know. Many have done so, in response, indeed, to Israel's announcement that civilians should leave northern Gaza for safety.

But there is simply nowhere to go for civilians to escape the destruction and privation, both of which grow by the hour as missiles continue to fly and essential supplies, including fuel, food, medical items, water, run low.

Due to the scarcity of water, UNRWA in some locations – and I want to pay a special tribute to UNRWA for the way in which it's provided a buffer against suffering in these terrible times – and then UNRWA in some locations is being forced to ration down to providing one litre of water per person per day. Bear in mind that the minimum by international standards should be 15 litres, and they're getting one – and they're the lucky ones.

People have been increasingly forced to consume from unsafe sources – we're hearing many, many more reports of that through UNRWA and other agencies – placing the population at risk, of course, of the outbreak of waterborne diseases.

And whether civilians move or stay — and that must be their decision, whether to move or stay, whether to move again or stay where they have moved to — whether they move or stay, they must be protected. They must not be attacked in places of civilian infrastructures. They must be protected in places of deconfliction, and they must have access to the essentials of humanitarian assistance to survive, which are available and in which we have all spent many, many detailed hours in detailed negotiations with the parties, and I'm grateful to them, to all of them, for the commitment that they have shown to these negotiations.

It means that the UN and the humanitarian partners — and I specifically refer to the great leadership shown, and I met their leaders today, of the Egyptian Red Crescent and the Palestinian Red Crescent — must be able to deliver relief to civilians in need throughout Gaza, without impediment, in places of their choice, in places where they consider themselves to be safe and where we can seek to ensure that safety.

We have humanitarian supplies; we have medical teams. UNRWA has a staff of 14,000 in Gaza still bravely working under these conditions. The other agencies do — the Red Crescents, of course, have many, many, many volunteers — and they are all ready to assist the people most in need.

I'm very grateful to many Member States for providing, very quickly, emergency funding available for the immediate relief in Gaza, including from the Central Emergency Response Fund that my Office runs, and the occupied [Palestinian] territory Humanitarian Fund. Thank you. Thank you to all of you who stepped up so quickly.

What we don't have, however, we have a lot, but what we don't have, and it's the killer, and what we desperately need, is immediate, safe humanitarian access across all of Gaza. And that is the burden of our discussions with key parties.

We urgently need a mechanism agreed by all relevant parties to allow for the regular provision of emergency needs throughout Gaza to get the level of distribution of assistance up to what it was before these terrible weeks — of 100 trucks a day providing assistance throughout Gaza to people in need. We need to get back to that level of ambition.

For that, we need additional funding. Agencies like UNRWA, the World Food Programme and, of course, for the Red Crescents in their leadership role, without new funding UNRWA — already painfully, woefully, lacking in funds — will not have the ability to continue to deliver core services.

As [Special Coordinator] Tor [Wennesland] said, and I'm glad he did, and he made two, I think, very important points. Gaza is not the only location of concern in this deeply troubling conflict.

Since the start of the latest hostilities, the situation in the West Bank has also been deteriorating, as [Special Coordinator] Tor [Wennesland] said, and he should know. Last week was the deadliest week for Palestinians in the West Bank since the United Nations started reporting fatalities in 2005, while settler violence incidents also have gone up from an average of three incidents a day

to eight. Suffering knows no borders. Widespread closures throughout the West Bank are impacting the ability of communities to access essential services.

And there is a real risk of the situation spiralling out of control.

What the people of Israel, Palestine, the region need – what we all need, what this Council’s mandate is in existence to secure – is for sanity and humanity to prevail, drawing on the provisions of international humanitarian law, for urgent efforts, this was [Special Coordinator] Tor [Wennesland]’s second point, to arrest any further descent in this brutal calamity.

[Ambassador] Lana [Nusseibeh] said it very eloquently, the worry that I suppose many of us have: Where will this lead us? Where will this lead us when the fighting has taken place?

Of course, we implore the parties to respect international humanitarian law. And, by the way, I want to be very clear that a humanitarian ceasefire would go a long way to easing the epic human suffering.

Finally, Mr. President, and I know I have gone on too long,

I want to conclude by expressing my deepest admiration, gratitude and comity for the extraordinary people who are delivering life-saving and humanitarian services in Gaza, in the West Bank, as they do in so many other parts of the world, many of whom are displaced, many have lost loved ones. Many of our staff, in all our agencies have had that kind of suffering.

The dedication and bravery of ambulance crews, health care professionals, people working in hospitals and clinics, actually is a reminder of the fundamentals of humanity which drive our efforts to resolve these differences, to resolve them through diplomacy, through dialogue, through kindness, through generosity, and through accountability.

I also want to express my profound personal gratitude – I have said it also already for [Special Coordinator] Tor [Wennesland], but also to my colleague and his colleague, our Deputy Special Coordinator, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, somebody with a title as long as mine, Lynn Hastings, and the humanitarians who are demonstrating unwavering commitment to providing essential assistance and relief.

Their collective efforts, their unstinting focus on key priorities, which are based on operational needs, exemplifies – not just the United Nations’ enduring commitment to extending hope and support – but exemplifies the commitment of the humanitarian community and its supporters, all of whom are in this room, to do the job that they have decided and resolved to choose for their lives.

XXX. Security Council fails to adopt resolution calling for humanitarian pauses

On 18 October, the Security Council met to consider the “Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question” (S/PV.9442). It considered one draft resolution (S/2023/773), submitted by Brazil, reproduced below. The draft resolution failed to be adopted due to a negative vote by the United States.

The Security Council,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, Recalling resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 446 (1979), 452 (1979), 465 (1980), 476 (1980), 478 (1980), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003), and 1850 (2008) and 2334 (2016),

Reaffirming that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their motivations, whenever and by whomsoever committed,

Expressing grave concern at the escalation of violence and the deterioration of the situation in the region, in particular the resulting heavy civilian casualties, and emphasizing that civilians in Israel and in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, must be protected, in accordance with international humanitarian law,

Expressing deep concern for the humanitarian situation in Gaza and for its grave effect for the civilian population, largely comprised of children, and underlining the need for full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access,

Encouraging efforts aiming at a cessation of hostilities that would help to ensure the protection of civilians both in Israel and in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem,

Reiterating its vision of a region where two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders,

Recalling that a lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be achieved by peaceful means, based on its relevant resolutions,

- 1. Firmly condemns all violence and hostilities against civilians and all acts of terrorism;*
- 2. Unequivocally rejects and condemns the heinous terrorist attacks by Hamas that took place in Israel starting 7 October 2023 and the taking of hostages;*
- 3. Calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, demanding for their safety, well-being, and humane treatment in compliance with international law;*
- 4. Urges all parties to fully comply with their obligations under international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including those related to the conduct of hostilities, including in relation to the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure,*

as well as humanitarian workers and assets and to allow for and facilitate humanitarian access for essential supplies and services to those in need;

5. *Strongly urges* the continuous, sufficient and unhindered provision of essential goods and services to civilians, including electricity, water, fuel, food, and medical supplies, stressing the imperative, under international humanitarian law, to ensure civilians are not deprived of objects indispensable to their survival;

6. *Calls* for the rescission of the order for civilians and UN staff to evacuate all areas in Gaza north of the Wadi Gaza and relocate in southern Gaza;

7. *Calls* for humanitarian pauses to allow full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access for United Nations humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other impartial humanitarian organizations, and encourages the establishment of humanitarian corridors and other initiatives for the delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians;

8. *Stresses* the importance of a humanitarian notification mechanism to protect UN facilities and all humanitarian sites, and to ensure the movement of aid convoys;

9. *Calls* for the respect and protection, consistent with international humanitarian law, of all medical personnel and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their means of transport and equipment, as well as hospitals and other medical facilities;

10. *Emphasizes* the importance of preventing spillover in the region and, in this regard, calls on all parties to exercise maximum restraint and on all those with influence on them to work toward this objective;

11. Decides to remain seized of the matter

XXXI. WHO Director-General gravely concerned about the health and well-being of civilians in Gaza

On 19 October, WHO Director-General, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus made the following [remarks](#) at the media briefing.

Like the rest of the world, all of us at WHO have been shocked, appalled and saddened by the conflict in Israel and Gaza.

The attacks by Hamas and other armed groups on the 7th of October that targeted Israeli civilians were horrific and unjustifiable.

At the same time, WHO is gravely concerned about the health and well-being of civilians in Gaza, who are suffering from bombardment and siege.

I also deplore the attacks on health care in both Gaza and Israel, which have led to deaths and injuries of health workers and patients on both sides.

Under international humanitarian law, all armed actors are obliged to actively protect health care.

The bomb that struck the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza City on Tuesday night, and the loss of life it caused, regardless of who was responsible, cannot be tolerated.

Despite the airstrikes and the risks to their own security, the WHO team in Gaza has delivered lifesaving medical supplies, sufficient to care for 2000 patients. But much more is needed.

In Cairo last week, I met with Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who agreed to facilitate the delivery of medical supplies to Gaza through the Rafah border crossing.

On Saturday, WHO delivered a planeload of supplies to Egypt from our logistics hub in Dubai, and a further four flights, with 40 metric tons of supplies, will arrive over the course of the next week.

These include trauma medicines to treat wounded patients, medicines for those with diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease, and other essential health supplies to serve the needs of 300,000 people, including pregnant women.

We welcome Israel's announcement yesterday that it will not block the entry of water, food and medicines into Gaza from Egypt. Fuel is also needed for hospital generators, ambulances and desalination plants – and we urge Israel to add fuel to the life-saving supplies allowed to enter Gaza.

Our trucks are loaded and ready to go. We are working with the Egypt and Palestine Red Crescent Societies to deliver our supplies into Gaza as soon as the Rafah crossing is opened, hopefully tomorrow.

WHO has mobilised US\$10 million dollars to support our response.

There's still time and opportunity to prevent the situation from escalating further.

WHO supports the United Nations Secretary-General's call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.

We call for the immediate and safe release of hostages seized and taken into Gaza by Hamas and other armed groups, among them children, older people and those who need urgent medical care.

We continue to appeal to Israel and Hamas to abide by their obligations under international law to protect civilians and health care.

We appeal to Israel to restore supplies of electricity and water.

I wish to be clear that as a United Nations agency, WHO is politically impartial, and is committed to supporting the health and well-being of all Israelis and all Palestinians.

To that end, WHO established an official presence in Israel in 2019, in addition to our existing office in the occupied Palestinian territory.

The WHO representative to the occupied Palestinian territory, Dr Rik Peeperkorn, and our special representative to Israel, Dr Michel Thieren, are both with us online today and available to answer questions.

Thank you to both of you and other colleagues for your efforts in this terrible situation.

Bullets and bombs are not the solution to this situation. War will bring nothing but destruction and horror, and it will do nothing to make the region more secure – in fact, the opposite.

The only solution – the only hope – is dialogue, understanding and peace.

While the crisis in Israel and Gaza is understandably dominating our headlines, there is another crisis that is being forgotten: Sudan.

Six months after the start of the fighting, the conflict in Sudan has had a devastating impact on people's lives and health across the country and beyond its borders.

More than 5.8 million people have been forced to flee their homes within and outside Sudan.

Sudan's health system was already overstretched before the war. Now it's at breaking point.

About 70% of hospitals in conflict-affected states are not functional.

Health workers have gone without pay for months and are regularly attacked, and health facilities are occupied, looted or destroyed.

WHO has verified 58 attacks on health care to date, which have killed 31 health workers and patients and injured 38.

People are dying from a lack of access to basic and essential healthcare and medication.

The rainy season in Sudan is further limiting access to vulnerable communities.

A cholera outbreak is spreading rapidly, while other outbreaks of malaria, measles and dengue continue to take lives.

We are also particularly concerned about the situation in Darfur. Many hospitals are reportedly inaccessible, and insecurity prevents humanitarian aid from being safely delivered.

Nearly half a million people have fled Darfur into Chad, many in immediate need of healthcare, including trauma care.

WHO has so far shipped over 1000 metric tons of health supplies to Sudan, and more is on its way. We have also launched 21 mobile health clinics to provide services to displaced people in various states.

We need the international community to show solidarity now. We need the steadfast commitment and support of our donors to continue to strengthen the response and meet the ever-mounting needs of the people of Sudan.

But the solution to this crisis is not fundamentally a humanitarian solution; it's a political solution.

Even as WHO responds to the many crises in our world, we continue to work in a huge range of areas to support countries to strengthen their health systems and meet the everyday health needs of their populations.

Today, WHO published the latest edition of the Essential Diagnostics List – an evidence-based register to guide countries on the most important diagnostics to have available for health workers and patients.

This year's list includes eight new tests, for hepatitis E, diabetes, endocrine disorders, reproductive, maternal and new-born health, and cardiovascular disease.

In total, the list now includes 216 tests.

Also today, WHO is issuing new guidance for countries on regulating the use of artificial intelligence for health.

AI holds great promise for health, in terms of improving diagnosis and treatment, especially in areas with a lack of medical specialists.

But it also comes with serious challenges, including the potential for unethical data collection, cybersecurity threats and misinformation.

This new guidance outlines six areas for regulation of AI for health, to support countries to harness its potential, while minimising its risks.

Finally, the influenza season is approaching in the northern hemisphere, even as hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19 continue to increase.

During the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, circulation of influenza viruses declined because of the precautions societies and individuals were taking to prevent infection with COVID-19.

Flu is now back to levels similar to those seen before the pandemic.

The co-circulation of flu, RSV and COVID-19 can cause significant disruption to health systems.

To protect yourself and your loved ones, and to help take the strain off health systems, WHO recommends vaccination against both influenza and COVID-19, especially for high-risk groups.

XXXII. Nine UN human rights experts decry bombing of hospitals and schools as crimes against humanity, call for prevention of genocide

On 19 October, Pedro Arrojo Agudo, Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation; Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967; Reem Alsalem, Special Rapporteur on Violence against women and girls; Ms. Paula Gaviria Betancur, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons; .Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Tlaleng Mofokeng, Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing; Ms. Farida Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on the right to education; Ms Ashwini K.P. Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance issued the following [statement](#).

“The strike against Al Ahli Arab Hospital is an atrocity. We are equally outraged by the deadly strike on the same day on an UNRWA school located in Al-Maghazi refugee camp that sheltered some 4000 displaced people, as well as two densely populated refugee camps,” the experts said.

The experts raised serious humanitarian and legal concerns over Israel tightening its 16-year siege of the enclave and its population and long-standing occupation, depriving 2.2 million people of essential food, fuel, water, electricity and medicine. An estimated 50,000 pregnant women in Gaza, are in desperate need of prenatal and postnatal care. The number of internally displaced people across the Gaza Strip is estimated at around one million.

They recalled that the UN Security Council has repeatedly condemned the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, which is prohibited under international humanitarian and criminal law. The unlawful denial of humanitarian access and depriving civilians of objects indispensable to their survival are also a violation of international humanitarian law, the experts warned.

The UN experts called for the protection of all humanitarian workers, after the World Health Organization (WHO) documented more than 136 attacks on health care services in the occupied Palestinian territory, including 59 attacks on the Gaza Strip, which resulted in the death of at least 16 health workers since the beginning of hostilities on 7 October. Israeli bombardment on Gaza has also killed 15 staff of the United Nations Refugee Works Agency (UNRWA) and four Palestine

Red Crescent paramedics in an ambulance. An ambulance driver of Magen David Adom in Israel lost his life while driving to treat injured people.

“The complete siege of Gaza coupled with unfeasible evacuation orders and forcible population transfers, is a violation of international humanitarian and criminal law. It is also unspeakably cruel,” the experts said.

They recalled that the wilful and systematic destruction of civilian homes and infrastructure, known as ‘domicide’, and cutting off drinking water, medicine, and essential food is clearly prohibited under international criminal law.

“We are sounding the alarm: There is an ongoing campaign by Israel resulting in crimes against humanity in Gaza. Considering statements made by Israeli political leaders and their allies, accompanied by military action in Gaza and escalation of arrests and killing in the West Bank, there is also a risk of genocide against the Palestine people,” the experts said.

“There are no justifications or exceptions for such crimes. We are appalled by the inaction of the international community in the face of belligerent war-mongering,” the experts said.

“The Gazan population, half of whom are children, have already suffered many decades of unlawful brutal occupation and lived under the blockade for 16 years,” the experts said.

“It is time to immediately cease fire and ensure urgent and unimpeded access to essential humanitarian supplies, including food, water, shelter, medicine, fuel and electricity. The physical safety of the civilian population must be guaranteed,” the experts said.

“The occupation needs to end and there must be reparation, restitution and reconstruction, towards full justice for Palestinians,” they said.

XXXIII. Secretary-General, speaking in front of the Rafah border crossing in Egypt, informs that humanitarian aid will be allowed to enter Gaza

On 20 October, Secretary-General António Guterres made the following [statement](#).

It is impossible to be here and not to feel a broken heart.

We are witnessing a paradox.

Behind these walls, we have two million people that is suffering enormously – that has no water, no food, no medicine, no fuel, that is under fire, that needs everything to survive.

On this side, we have seen so many trucks loaded with water, with fuel, with medicines, with food. Exactly the same things that are needed on this side of the wall. So these trucks are not just trucks. They are a lifeline. They are the difference between life and death for so many people in

Gaza. And to see them stuck here makes me be very clear. What we need is to make them move, to make them move to the other side of this wall, to make them move as quickly as possible and as many as possible.

Now, recently it was announced by Israel and by the United States that humanitarian aid will be allowed to enter Gaza. And I know that there is also an agreement between Egypt and Israel to make it possible.

But these announcements were made with some conditions and some restrictions. And so we are now actively engaging with all the parties, actively engaging with Egypt, with Israel, with the US, in order to make sure that we are able to clarify those conditions, that we are able to limit those restrictions in order to have as soon as possible these trucks moving to where they are needed.

We need, we absolutely need to have these trucks moving as quickly as possible and as many as necessary. But for that, this must be a sustained effort.

We are not looking for one convoy to come; we are looking for convoys to be authorized, with meaningful numbers of trucks to go everywhere into Gaza to provide enough support to the Gaza people.

On the other hand, there are requirements of verification. But those verifications need to be effective, but at the same time, those verifications need to be done in a way that is practical and in a way that is expedited.

On the other hand, we are not in a no-man's land. We are in the land of a sovereign country – Egypt. And it is essential to recognize the role of the Egyptian institutions and namely of the Egyptian Red Crescent.

And finally, for UNRWA, to be able to distribute aid on that side, it is necessary that UNRWA has fuel and so we need to have the guarantee that we have enough fuel on the other side to distribute aid to the people in need.

So, it is very clear that it is absolutely essential to solve these problems quickly and I am hopeful they will be solved quickly to make sure there is massive support, humanitarian support, to the people of Gaza.

Unfortunately, this is not a normal humanitarian operation. It is an operation in a war zone and that is the reason why I have appealed for a humanitarian ceasefire, not that I consider that a humanitarian ceasefire is a precondition for humanitarian delivery. We don't want to punish the Gaza people twice. First because of the war and second because of the lack of humanitarian aid. But it is clear that a humanitarian ceasefire will make things much easier and much safer for everybody.

And I want to end by expressing my deep gratitude to the people and the Government of Egypt. Egypt is today the fundamental pillar that allows hope to exist on that side of the border. Hope that these trucks will move to support them. Hope that the food, aid and the medicines I have seen in a

plane that has landed will also go to the people that needs it. Hope that there will be a future and hope that one day there will be peace with a two-State solution, with Palestinians and Israelis living in peace in two States, one side by the other.

XXXIV. Secretary-General tells peace summit that a two-State solution is the only realistic foundation for a true peace and stability

On 21 October, the Secretary-General António Guterres made the following [remarks](#) at the Cairo Summit for Peace.

We meet in the heart of a region that is reeling in pain and one step from the precipice.

A region where it is impossible not to be rocked to the core by heart-wrenching, soul-searing images of suffering.

Yesterday I went to the Rafah border crossing.

There I saw a paradox — a humanitarian catastrophe playing out in real time.

On the one hand, I saw hundreds of trucks teeming with food and other essential supplies.

On the other hand, we know that just across the border, there are two million people — without water, food, fuel, electricity and medicine.

Children, mothers, the elderly, the sick.

Full trucks on one side, empty stomachs on the other.

Those trucks need to move as quickly as possible in a massive, sustained and safe way from Egypt into Gaza.

A 20-truck convoy of the Egyptian Red Crescent is moving today.

And I want to express my deep gratitude to Egypt in this regard.

But the people of Gaza need a commitment for much, much more – a continuous delivery of aid to Gaza at the scale that is needed.

We are working nonstop with all parties that are relevant to make it happen.

Excellencies,

Let's be clear.

The grievances of the Palestinian people are legitimate and long.

We cannot and must not ignore the wider context for these tragic events: the long-standing conflict and 56 years of occupation with no end in sight.

But nothing can justify the reprehensible assault by Hamas that terrorized Israeli civilians.

And those abhorrent attacks can never justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people.

International humanitarian law – including the Geneva Conventions – must be upheld.

That includes protecting civilians and not attacking hospitals, schools and UN premises that are currently sheltering half a million people.

Excellencies,

Our near-term goals must be clear:

Immediate, unrestricted and sustained humanitarian aid for besieged civilians in Gaza.

Immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

And immediate and dedicated efforts to prevent the spread of violence which is increasing the risk of spillover.

To advance all these efforts, I appeal for a humanitarian ceasefire now.

Excellencies,

Our sustained collective efforts and resources have never been needed more.

As we focus on ending the bloodshed, we cannot lose sight of the only realistic foundation for a true peace and stability: a two-State solution.

Israelis must see their legitimate needs for security materialized, and Palestinians must see their legitimate aspirations for an independent State realized, in line with United Nations resolutions, international law and previous agreements.

The time has come for action.

Action to end this godawful nightmare.

Action to build a future worthy of the dreams of the children of Palestine, Israel, the region and our world.

XXXV. UN human rights experts urge Israeli military’s lawyers to refuse legal authorisation of actions that could amount to war crimes

On 23 October, Margaret Satterthwaite, Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers and Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism made the following [statement](#).

“We unequivocally condemn the massacres of civilians and hostage-taking by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups in Israel,” the experts said. “Those acts, committed against civilians, were atrocities.”

They noted that since the 7 October attack, the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) have been reportedly preparing for a ground invasion.

“Israel has launched a barrage of deadly airstrikes into densely populated civilian areas in the Gaza strip, destroying or damaging homes, hospitals, markets, and UN Reliefs and Works Agency (UNRWA) buildings,” the experts said. The airstrikes have reportedly killed more than 3,400 Palestinians and injured more than 12,000, including children.

The experts also noted that Israel increased its blockade on Gaza, cutting off food, water, electricity, and fuel supplies.

“As Israel responds to Hamas and conducts operations in Gaza, all lawyers advising the military must identify and seek to prevent actions that may amount to war crimes. They have a professional duty to deny legal authorisation for criminal acts,” the experts said.

“Lawyers must refuse to give legal authorisation for actions that violate international law,” they said.

XXXVI. UN Human Rights Chief urges humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza and Israel

On 23 October, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk made the following [statement](#).

“Far too many civilian lives, many of them children, have already been lost – on both sides – as a consequence of these hostilities. And, unless something changes, coming days will see more civilians on the brink of death from continuing bombardment. Humanity must come first,” the High Commissioner for Human Rights said.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza, already strangled by 16 years of blockade, is now verging on catastrophe due to lack of water, power, sanitation, essential medicine, food, and other basic

necessities, Türk said. Reports of overcrowding and spread of diseases are deeply worrying, even more so when hospitals are damaged and destroyed, there is a worsening shortage of medicines, and movement is heavily restricted.

“This violence will never end unless leaders stand up and take the brave and humane choices that are required by fundamental humanity. The first step must be an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, saving the lives of civilians through the delivery of prompt and effective humanitarian aid, throughout Gaza, provided according to need and not limited by any other, arbitrary criteria,” he added.

Since 7 October, more than 5,000 people in Gaza have been killed, including 2,000 children, mostly as a result of IDF attacks and operations, as have 1,300 Israeli citizens and residents as a result of attacks by Palestinian armed groups. Civilians constitute the majority of those killed in both Gaza and Israel. Over 1,400, including 800 children, are reportedly trapped under rubble in Gaza. Tens of thousands of homes have been destroyed.

“All civilians captured and held by Palestinian armed groups must be released immediately and unconditionally. The taking and holding of hostages is prohibited by international law,” Türk said.

“Action by Israel to cut off civilians from access to essential goods and services as a form of collective punishment, also violates international law.

“The parties to the conflict must take immediate steps to comply with their international law obligations – in particular to respect the fundamental principles of necessity, distinction and proportionality and to take precautions to minimize incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian property and objects. Palestinian armed groups must cease the use of indiscriminate rockets, and the IDF must avoid using explosive weapons with wide area effects in densely populated areas due to the significant likelihood of indiscriminate effects,” Türk said.

Over the weekend, in some of the most intensive Israeli raids of the past two weeks on Gaza, close to 1,000 Gazans were reportedly killed, some in and around hospitals, mosques and schools where many had sought shelter and safety.

The humanitarian aid which resumed from Egypt over the weekend is a mere drop in the ocean of what is needed, when hospitals deprived of resources are overflowed by over 15,000 wounded, Türk said.

“If more aid for Gazans, including fuel, medicine, food and water, does not arrive in days or even hours, many more people in Gaza will die, of hunger, thirst and lack of medical care,” he said. “I am deeply worried about the struggles for survival of Palestinians in Gaza, including many of my own and other UN staff.”

Türk emphasised that all parties must comply fully with the laws of war and human rights law. He also stressed the obligations under international law of third States, in particular those with influence over the parties to the conflict, to take measures to ensure respect for international

humanitarian law, underlining that “violations of international law harm the interests of all States, and all States bound by the Geneva Conventions are called on to ensure compliance by all other parties with these rules of war”.

“International humanitarian law is crystal clear. The protection of civilians is paramount, and any actions that contravene this will be scrutinised closely, with grave breaches risking exposure to liability for war crimes and other atrocity crimes,” Türk said.

“The laws of war must prevail. And those who flout these rules must understand that they do so with the world watching. Accountability must be served.

“There can be no double standards when we speak about human rights. The rights of one group of people are not higher than that of the other,” he added. “The rules apply equally to everyone.”

XXXVII. Secretary-General tells Security Council Hamas attacks cannot be justification for collective punishment of Palestinian people

On 24 October, the Secretary-General António Guterres made the following [remarks](#) at the Security Council meeting.

The situation in the Middle East is growing more dire by the hour.

The war in Gaza is raging and risks spiralling throughout the region.

Divisions are splintering societies. Tensions threaten to boil over.

At a crucial moment like this, it is vital to be clear on principles — starting with the fundamental principle of respecting and protecting civilians.

I have condemned unequivocally the horrifying and unprecedented 7 October acts of terror by Hamas in Israel.

Nothing can justify the deliberate killing, injuring and kidnapping of civilians – or the launching of rockets against civilian targets.

All hostages must be treated humanely and released immediately and without conditions. I respectfully note the presence among us of members of their families.

Excellencies,

It is important to also recognize the attacks by Hamas did not happen in a vacuum.

The Palestinian people have been subjected to 56 years of suffocating occupation.

They have seen their land steadily devoured by settlements and plagued by violence; their economy stifled; their people displaced and their homes demolished. Their hopes for a political solution to their plight have been vanishing.

But the grievances of the Palestinian people cannot justify the appalling attacks by Hamas. And those appalling attacks cannot justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people.

Excellencies,

Even war has rules.

We must demand that all parties uphold and respect their obligations under international humanitarian law; take constant care in the conduct of military operations to spare civilians; and respect and protect hospitals and respect the inviolability of UN facilities which today are sheltering more than 600,000 Palestinians.

The relentless bombardment of Gaza by Israeli forces, the level of civilian casualties, and the wholesale destruction of neighbourhoods continue to mount and are deeply alarming.

I mourn and honour the dozens of UN colleagues working for UNRWA – sadly, at least 35 and counting – killed in the bombardment of Gaza over the last two weeks.

I owe to their families my condemnation of these and many other similar killings.

The protection of civilians is paramount in any armed conflict.

Protecting civilians can never mean using them as human shields.

Protecting civilians does not mean ordering more than one million people to evacuate to the south, where there is no shelter, no food, no water, no medicine and no fuel, and then continuing to bomb the south itself.

I am deeply concerned about the clear violations of international humanitarian law that we are witnessing in Gaza.

Let me be clear: No party to an armed conflict is above international humanitarian law.

Excellencies,

Thankfully, some humanitarian relief is finally getting into Gaza.

But it is a drop of aid in an ocean of need.

In addition, our UN fuel supplies in Gaza will run out in a matter of days. That would be another disaster.

Without fuel, aid cannot be delivered, hospitals will not have power, and drinking water cannot be purified or even pumped.

The people of Gaza need continuous aid delivery at a level that corresponds to the enormous needs. That aid must be delivered without restrictions.

I salute our UN colleagues and humanitarian partners in Gaza working under hazardous conditions and risking their lives to provide aid to those in need. They are an inspiration.

To ease epic suffering, make the delivery of aid easier and safer, and facilitate the release of hostages, I reiterate my appeal for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.

Excellencies,

Even in this moment of grave and immediate danger, we cannot lose sight of the only realistic foundation for a true peace and stability: a two-State solution.

Israelis must see their legitimate needs for security materialized, and Palestinians must see their legitimate aspirations for an independent State realized, in line with United Nations resolutions, international law and previous agreements.

Finally, we must be clear on the principle of upholding human dignity.

Polarization and dehumanization are being fuelled by a tsunami of disinformation.

We must stand up to the forces of antisemitism, anti-Muslim bigotry and all forms of hate.

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Today is United Nations Day, marking 78 years since the UN Charter entered into force.

That Charter reflects our shared commitment to advance peace, sustainable development and human rights.

On this UN Day, at this critical hour, I appeal to all to pull back from the brink before the violence claims even more lives and spreads even farther.

XXXVIII. UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process briefs Security Council

On 24 October, the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland [briefed](#) the Security Council.

I thank you for your sustained attention to the grave developments unfolding in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in and around Gaza.

In light of the horrific violence of these past weeks, allow me to begin by expressing my most sincere condolences to the thousands of families – in Israel, Palestine and across the globe – who are in mourning, in shock and in profound pain. This includes the families of 35 UN staff killed in Gaza.

The abhorrent attack launched by Hamas on 7 October and Israel's devastating, ongoing military operation in Gaza have taken a staggering toll on civilians and deeply shaken Israelis and Palestinians alike. As I told this Council last week and the Secretary-General has just expressed, the events we are witnessing are unprecedented; they risk expanding to the wider region and may have a profound long-term impact on the dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Mr. President,

On the morning of 7 October, Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups launched a large-scale, complex assault on Israel. The unprecedented attack saw an estimated 1,500 Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad militants from Gaza infiltrate some twenty Israeli communities and military facilities in the Gaza periphery by land, sea and air, while thousands of rockets were launched towards central Israel, including Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

Testimony and evidence emerging from that tragic day reveal a sickening killing spree, designed to terrorize, with appalling scenes of brutality, massacres and hostage-taking, including against infants and young children. In all, Hamas and other Palestinian militant-groups killed over 1,400 Israelis and foreign nationals – the bloodiest attack in Israel's history. This includes over 1,000 civilians, many of them women and children, and over 360 security forces personnel. Over 5,400 Israelis were injured.

At least 220 civilians, including women and children, as well as soldiers, were abducted and taken into the Gaza Strip as hostages. While not confirmed, Hamas has said that 22 hostages were killed by Israeli strikes. I welcome the release of four hostages and recognize the important roles of Egypt [sic] and Qatar in this regard. To the families of hostages, some of whom are with us today, the fear and uncertainty you have had to endure is unimaginable. As the Secretary-General and I have said repeatedly, your loved ones must be returned to you immediately and unconditionally.

Heavy fighting between Israeli forces and militants inside Israeli communities continued until 10 October, when the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) said it regained control of the perimeter fence. Over 120,000 Israelis were displaced from the area.

Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups in Gaza have continued to launch indiscriminate rocket fire from Gaza into Israel, reaching as far north as Haifa. To date, according to Israeli sources, some 7,700 rockets have been launched.

Mr. President,

On the day of the attack, Israel's Security Cabinet declared a state of war for the first time in over 50 years, with the aim of "the destruction of the military and governing capabilities of Hamas and Islamic Jihad." That same day, Israeli forces began a massive bombardment of what they said were Hamas sites throughout Gaza. Israeli air assault in the Strip has continued to date, with some 5,000 such sites targeted, according to the IDF. On 8 October, Israel's Minister of Defence announced a complete siege of Gaza, blocking all entry of goods, including electricity, water, food, fuel, and medical equipment.

The airstrikes have been devastating and resulted in a staggering number of Palestinian fatalities, a vast number of whom are civilians. Thus far, the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza has reported over 5,000 Palestinians killed, including over 1,100 women, 2,000 children as well as journalists, medical workers and first responders, with more than 15,000 injured. Authorities estimate that hundreds more lay dead or injured under the rubble as rescue efforts languish amid continuous airstrikes. Over 1 million Palestinians have been displaced.

The level of physical destruction has left entire neighbourhoods in rubble and critical infrastructure has been destroyed or damaged. Schools, including UNRWA schools, and hospitals — many sheltering displaced Palestinians — have been hit. Displacement levels are unprecedented.

Compounding the destruction from airstrikes, the humanitarian impact has been immense. In this regard, I welcome Egypt's facilitation to open the Rafah border crossing on 21 October and reiterate that humanitarian assistance needs to flow safely and continuously into the Strip.

I echo the Secretary-General's appeal for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.

Lynn Hastings, the Humanitarian Coordinator in the OPT, will report in full on the humanitarian situation on behalf of the Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths.

The risk of a significant further deterioration of the situation in the occupied West Bank or spillover of the conflict in the region remains significant.

Violence in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem — already at worrying levels — has increased since the outbreak of war. Israeli authorities have imposed widespread movement restrictions and conducted extensive arrests. High numbers of daily clashes and armed exchanges between Palestinians and Israeli security forces and settlers have been recorded, as well as settler-related violence and Palestinian attacks against Israelis. Since 7 October, 93 Palestinians, including 27 children, have been killed by ISF or settlers, and one Israeli security personnel was killed in an armed exchange. Large demonstrations in solidarity with the Gaza population took place in cities across the West Bank, with some leading to confrontations with Palestinian Security Forces.

Meanwhile, across the Blue Line, and amid heightened rhetoric from actors on the ground, there have been daily intermittent but intense exchanges of fire since 8 October. Hezbollah, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad have launched rockets and anti-tank missiles toward Israel, while IDF responded with artillery fire and air strikes, leading to casualties on both sides. On 13 and 20

October, two journalists were killed. Palestinian militants from Lebanon have also made several infiltration attempts, the most significant, on 9 October. Over 80,000 Israelis have been evacuated from their homes and some 20,000 Lebanese have been displaced.

On the Golan, the Israeli Defense Forces responded on 10 October with artillery and mortar shells towards what they said were a number of launches from Syria toward Israel. Syrian state media reported Israeli air attacks on 12 and 22 October targeting the international airports in Damascus and Aleppo, and on 14 October Aleppo international airport. UNDOF continues to engage with both parties, urging them to exercise maximum restraint and respect their obligations under the 1974 Agreement on the Disengagement of Forces.

The Secretary-General has been very clear in expressing the United Nations condemnation of the horrifying attacks by Hamas and others on 7 October and deep alarm at the scale of Israeli airstrikes and the scope of civilian casualties and destruction in Gaza.

Over these past weeks, the Secretary-General and I have been pursuing any and every opportunity to address the situation on the ground and to prevent further civilian death and misery.

It is critical, that we, as a united international community, employ all our collective efforts to end the bloodletting and prevent any further expansion of hostilities – including in the region. The stakes are astronomically high and I appeal for all relevant actors to act responsibly. Any miscalculation could have immeasurable consequences.

In this regard, I welcome Egypt's convening of the Cairo Peace Summit on 21 October and the efforts of States in the region and beyond to address the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe before us and to pave the way for unlocking a real and serious peace process.

These devastating events are not divorced from the broader context in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Israel and the region, where dynamics are deeply intertwined.

The unresolved conflict and continued occupation shape the reality of every Israeli and every Palestinian. For 15 years, the Palestinian population has been living under militant rule and a strict closure regime, as the Palestinian divide hardened. For a generation, hope has been lost and despair has prevailed for those who see prospects for a more peaceful future pulling still further away.

Only a political solution will move us forward.

The steps we take to address this crisis must be implemented in a way that ultimately advances a negotiated peace that fulfils the legitimate national aspirations of Palestinians and Israelis – the long-held vision of two-States, in line with UN resolutions, international law and previous agreements.

XXXIX. Chair of Palestinian Rights Committee (CEIRPP) appeals to the Security Council to overcome divisions and to act now to stop the bloodshed and protect the Palestinian people

On 24 October, the Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) made the following [statement](#) at the Security Council meeting.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People thanks Brazil for its Presidency of the Security Council this month and expresses appreciation for the briefing of Mr. Tor Wennesland, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. The Committee also commends Secretary-General António Guterres for his tireless efforts to address the crisis we are facing.

Over the years, we have repeatedly warned that the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, was unsustainable. Without a political horizon, and in a context of relentless human rights violations, the deterioration of the situation and escalation become inevitable. Yet the Security Council remains unable to bring a halt to the bloodshed and to protect civilian lives – as regrettably witnessed with the veto last week.

On 7 October, I issued a statement condemning the killing and wounding of hundreds of civilians in Israel; we also condemned the taking of hostages. We welcome the recent release of 4 captives and thank Qatar and Egypt for their efforts to this end. I further call for the release of all captives as well as all political prisoners.

On 17 October, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement that, inter alia, condemned the killing and wounding of thousands of civilians and the targeting and widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure in the Gaza Strip.

Israel, the occupying Power, bears responsibility for protecting the civilian population and for the unfolding humanitarian disaster. Everyone repeatedly warned about the risks of explosion because Israel's 16-year-old illegal blockade on Gaza has transformed the Strip into an open-air prison and impoverished the population.

We strongly condemn Israel's reprisal air strikes and bombardment of the densely populated Gaza Strip, killing, as of 23 October over 5,087 Palestinians, including women and over 2,055 children and injuring more than 15,273 Palestinians. Thousands of others are said to remain under the rubble of their destroyed homes.

Particularly abhorrent war crimes are attacks on medical facilities, like the Al Ahli Anglican hospital in Gaza City, where an air strike killed some 500 people, including children, women, men and medical personnel, or places of worship sheltering civilians, as the attack on the Greek Orthodox Saint Porphyrius Church, killing and wounding dozens.

It is estimated by UN OCHA that over 1.4 million Palestinians in Gaza have been displaced.

The Committee further condemns Israel's military orders for Palestinians in northern Gaza to 'evacuate' to the south of the Strip: there is nowhere safe to go in Gaza.

Forced transfer of people is a grave breach of international law. We second the call by the Secretary-General and UN agencies for Israel to rescind this evacuation order. We cannot stand by and watch another Nakba being inflicted on the Palestinian people.

Wars have rules, which this Organization, this body must work for to uphold and ensure compliance with – always. Collective punishment, denial of humanitarian assistance, military attacks on homes, hospitals, places of worship, and schools and facilities where civilians seek refuge are violations of international humanitarian law.

We call for an immediate ceasefire.

Israel must immediately lift its total siege of Gaza and allow food, water, electricity, medical and other lifesaving supplies as their deliberate denial is tantamount to collective punishment of the 2.3 million Palestinians living in Gaza, half of whom are children. We commend Egypt for facilitating the entry of crucial humanitarian aid into Gaza through the Rafah crossing and urge Israel to allow an unimpeded flow of assistance. Similarly, we praise Egypt's convening of the Cairo International Summit for Peace in the Middle East, on 21 October. We need more – not less dialogue.

UNRWA reported losing 35 staff members killed by Israel's bombings. Its facilities are sheltering over 600,000 internally displaced persons while its life-saving supplies are dwindling. The Agency has called for US\$104 million in emergency support. We call on all Member States to provide urgent financial assistance to UNRWA and to continue strongly supporting its indispensable mission.

We regret that the situation in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is also rapidly deteriorating, with 91 Palestinians, including over 20 children, killed since 7 October by Israeli occupying forces and settlers.

The Committee welcomes the decision by the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel to collect evidence of war crimes committed by all sides since 7 October 2023. It also joins the call for the International Criminal Court to launch a fact-finding mission to investigate violations of IHL. There must be accountability for all human rights violations and international law breaches perpetrated in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

The current crisis has proved once again the centrality of the Palestinian question to Middle East and global stability. While we are absorbed by the immediate need of securing a ceasefire and providing desperately needed humanitarian assistance, we must emphasize that there is no military solution to this conflict. We need to focus on our longstanding objectives: the end of the Israeli occupation and the fulfilment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and independence. These are the pillars of a just and lasting peace.

I appeal to the Security Council and all Member States to overcome divisions and to act now to stop the bloodshed and protect the Palestinian people. We reiterate our call for an immediate ceasefire and for the delivery of urgent and unimpeded humanitarian assistance to all those in need.

Lastly, the Committee reiterates its appeals for serious international efforts leading to the sovereignty and independence of the State of Palestine on the basis of the 1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with international law and relevant UN resolutions, and for providing a just solution for the plight of the Palestine refugees.

This – and not bloodshed – is the only path for a just and lasting resolution of the question of Palestine as well as for peace in the Middle East.

XL. Security Council fails to adopt competing resolutions on Gaza

On 25 October, the Security Council met to consider the “Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question” (S/PV.9453). It considered two draft resolutions (S/2023/792) and (S/2023/795) submitted by the United States and the Russian Federation, respectively, reproduced below. Both resolutions failed to be adopted due to negative votes by China, Russian Federation and to the failure to garner the required number of votes, respectively.

[\(S/2023/792\)](#)

United States of America: draft resolution

The Security Council,

Reaffirming the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Recalling its resolutions on combatting terrorism, against kidnapping and hostage taking of civilians by terrorist organizations, on the protection of civilians and children in armed conflict, on hunger in conflict, and on the situation in the Middle East, and recalling that any measures taken to counter terrorism must comply with all obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law, and international humanitarian law,

Expressing deep concern at instances of discrimination, intolerance and violent extremism, manifesting in the form of hate speech or violence based on race, sex, ethnicity or religion or belief, such as but not limited to persons belonging to religious communities, in particular cases motivated by Islamophobia, antisemitism or Christianophobia, and other forms of intolerance,

Reaffirming that terrorism in all forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their motivations, whenever and by whomsoever committed,

Expressing grave concern at the deterioration of the situation in the region, and emphasizing that all civilian populations – including Israelis and Palestinians – must be protected in accordance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law,

Expressing deep concern for the humanitarian situation in Gaza and for its grave impact on the civilian population, especially the disproportionate effect on children, and underlining the need for full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access,

Recalling its desire that a lasting end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be achieved by peaceful means, based on its relevant resolutions, Noting that Hamas and other terrorist groups in Gaza do not stand for the dignity or self-determination of the Palestinian people and that Hamas has been designated as a terrorist organization by numerous Member States,

Determined to combat by all means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other obligations under international law, including international human rights law, international refugee law, and international humanitarian law, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts,

1. *Unequivocally rejects and condemns* the heinous terrorist attacks by Hamas and other terrorist groups that took place in Israel starting 7 October 2023, as well as the taking and killing of hostages, murder, torture, rape, sexual violence, and continued indiscriminate firing of rockets;

2. *Expresses* its deepest sympathy and condolences to the victims and their families and to the Government of Israel and all Governments whose citizens were targeted and lost their lives in the above-mentioned attacks;

3. *Further expresses* its deepest sympathy and condolences to Palestinian civilians and all other civilians who have lost their lives since 7 October 2023, including at the Al Ahli Hospital on 17 October 2023;

4. *Reaffirms* the inherent right of all States to individual and collective self-defence, and also reaffirms that in responding to terrorist attacks, Member States must fully comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law, and international humanitarian law;

5. *Strongly urges* all parties to fully respect and comply with obligations under international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including those related to the conduct of hostilities and to the protection of the civilian population, including civilians who are trying to get to safety, and civilian infrastructure, and reiterates the need to take appropriate steps to ensure the safety and well-being of civilians and their protection, as well as humanitarian workers and assets;

6. *Reaffirms* that any movement of people must be voluntary, safe, and consistent with international law and urges all parties to take appropriate steps to promote the safety and well-being of civilians and their protection, including children, in allowing their safe movement;

7. *Condemns* in the strongest terms all violence and hostilities against civilians, as well as the continued gross, systematic and widespread abuses of human rights, violations of international humanitarian law, and depraved acts of destruction carried out by Hamas, including its deplorable use of civilians as human shields and its attempt to thwart the protection of civilians;

8. *Demands* the immediate and unconditional release of all remaining hostages taken by Hamas and other terrorist groups, as well as their continued safety, well-being, and humane treatment consistent with international law and expresses appreciation for the efforts by all states, including Qatar, for the release on 20 October 2023 of two hostages taken by Hamas;

9. *Calls* for all measures, specifically to include humanitarian pauses, to allow the full, rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access, consistent with international humanitarian law, for United Nations humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other impartial humanitarian organizations, to facilitate the continuous, sufficient and unhindered provision of essential goods and services important to the well-being of civilians in Gaza, including especially water, electricity, fuel, food, and medical supplies;

10. *Welcomes* the announcement on 21 October 2023 by the Secretary General of the initial provision of humanitarian supplies to civilians in Gaza via the Rafah Crossing, as well as the additional delivery of supplies on 22 October 2023, and calls on Member States to further support the efforts of the United Nations, Egypt, Jordan, and others to further allow the full, rapid, safe, and unhindered access consistent with international humanitarian law and to build on this important first step, including by advancing such practical steps such as the establishment of humanitarian corridors and other initiatives for the sustainable delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians;

11. *Reiterates* the call on all parties to armed conflict to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law including regarding respecting and protecting civilians and taking constant care to spare civilian objects, including such objects critical to the delivery of essential services to the civilian population, refraining from attacking, destroying, removing or rendering useless objects that are indispensable to the survival of the civilian population and respecting and protecting humanitarian personnel and consignments used for humanitarian relief operations;

12. *Emphasizes* that civilian and humanitarian facilities, including medical hospitals, medical facilities, schools, places of worship, and facilities of the UN, as well as humanitarian personnel, and medical personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, and their means of transport, must be respected and protected, according to international humanitarian law, and calls on all parties to act consistently with these principles and rules;

13. *Underscores* the importance of coordination and deconfliction to protect all humanitarian sites, including UN facilities, and to help facilitate the movement of aid convoys;

14. *Urges* Member States to intensify their efforts to suppress the financing of terrorism, including by restricting financing of Hamas through applicable national level authorities, in accordance with international law and consistent with resolution 2482 (2019);

15. *Calls* on all States and international organizations to intensify urgent, concrete steps to support efforts by the United Nations and regional States to prevent the violence in Gaza from escalating, spilling over or expanding to other areas in the region, and calls on all those with influence to work towards this objective, including by demanding the immediate cessation by Hezbollah and other armed-groups of all attacks which constitute clear violations of resolution 1701 (2006) and relevant Security Council resolutions;

16. *Calls* on all States to take practical steps to prevent the export of arms and materiel to armed militias and terrorist groups operating in Gaza, including Hamas; 17. Stresses that lasting peace can only be based on an enduring commitment to mutual recognition, full respect for human rights, freedom from violence and incitement, and affirms the urgency of diplomatic efforts to achieve a comprehensive peace based on the vision of a region where two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace with secure and recognized borders as envisioned in its prior resolutions, and calls for the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations based on the relevant United Nations resolutions including a two-State solution;

18. *Expresses* its solidarity with all the people who long for lasting peace based on a two-state solution, and also its support for practical measures, consistent with international law, necessary to contribute to ending the cycle of violence; rebuilding trust and confidence, and creating the necessary conditions to advance peace and security;

19. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter

[\(S/2023/795\)](#)

Russian Federation, Sudan and Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: draft resolution

The Security Council,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, Recalling resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 446 (1979), 452 (1979), 465 (1980), 471(1980), 476 (1980), 478 (1980), 497 (1981), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003), 1701 (2006), and 1850 (2008) and 2334 (2016),

Condemning any terrorist acts as well as acts of violence and hostilities against civilians regardless of their motivations, whenever and whomsoever committed, Expressing grave concern at the escalation of violence and the deterioration of the situation in the region, in particular the resulting heavy civilian casualties, and emphasizing that civilians in Israel and in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, must be protected, in accordance with international humanitarian law,

Expressing deep concern at the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and at its grave impact on the civilian population, especially disproportioned effect on children, and underlining the need for full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access,

Determining that the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip constitutes a threat to peace and security in the region, Emphasizing that the humanitarian situation will continue to

deteriorate further in the absence of a political solution, Reiterating its vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders, Recalling that a lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be achieved by peaceful means, based on its relevant resolutions,

1. *Calls* for an immediate, durable and fully respected humanitarian ceasefire;

2. *Firmly condemns* all violence and hostilities against civilians;

3. *Unequivocally rejects* and condemns the heinous attacks by Hamas that took place in Israel starting 7 October 2023 and the taking of civilian hostages, and expresses its deepest sympathy and condolences to all Israeli civilians and all other civilians who have lost their lives;

4. Also *unequivocally condemns* indiscriminate attacks against civilians as well as against civilian objects in the Gaza Strip resulting in civilian casualties, in particular heinous strike against Al Ahli hospital 17 October and the orthodox Church of Saint Porphyrius 19 October, and condemns and rejects the actions to impose the blockade of the Gaza Strip depriving civilian population of means indispensable for their survival, in violation of international humanitarian law, and expresses its deepest sympathy and condolences to Palestinian civilians and all other civilians who have lost their lives, as well as the UN personnel;

5. *Notes* in this regard that humanitarian ceasefire agreement could play a vital role to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance in order to help save civilian lives, and further calls for all measures, such as humanitarian pauses and establishment of humanitarian corridors, necessary to allow humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other impartial humanitarian organizations full, rapid, safe and unhindered access to all affected areas in the Gaza Strip in accordance with international humanitarian law, to provide essential goods and services important to the well-being of the civilian population of the Gaza Strip, including water, electricity, fuel, food and medical supplies;

6. *Welcomes* the announcement on 21 October 2023 by the Secretary-General of the initial provision of humanitarian supplies to civilians in the Gaza Strip via the “Rafah” border crossing, as well as the additional delivery of supplies on 22 October 2023, and calls on Member States to further support the efforts of the United Nations, Egypt, Jordan, and others to build on this important step;

7. Also *strongly urges* the continuous, sufficient and unhindered provision of essential goods and services to civilians, including electricity, water, fuel, food, and medical supplies, stressing the imperative, under international humanitarian law, to ensure civilians are not deprived of objects indispensable to their survival;

8. *Urges* the immediate rescission of the order for civilians and UN staff to evacuate all areas in Gaza north of the Wadi Gaza and relocate in southern Gaza; 9. Stresses the importance of a humanitarian notification mechanism to protect UN facilities, all humanitarian sites and hospitals and other medical facilities, and to ensure the movement of aid convoys;

10. *Strongly urges* all parties to fully comply with their obligations under international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including those related to the conduct of hostilities, including in relation to the protection of civilians;

11. *Reiterates* the call on all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, including regarding taking constant care to spare civilian objects, including those critical to the delivery of essential services to the civilian population, refraining from attacking, destroying, removing or rendering useless objects that are indispensable to the survival of the civilian populations and respecting and protecting humanitarian personnel and medical personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their means of transport and equipment, as well as hospitals and other medical facilities;

12. *Calls* for the immediate and unconditional release of all civilian hostages, demanding for their safety, well-being, and humane treatment in compliance with international law;

13. *Emphasizes* the importance of preventing spillover in the region and, in this regard, calls on all parties to exercise maximum restraint and on all those with influence on them to work toward this objective;

14. *Stresses* that lasting peace can only be based on an enduring commitment to mutual recognition, full respect for human rights, freedom from violence and incitement, and affirms the urgency of diplomatic efforts to achieve a comprehensive peace based on the vision of a region where two states, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace with secure and recognized borders as envisioned in its prior resolutions, and calls for the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations based on the relevant United Nations resolutions including a two-State solution;

15. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

XLI. WHO Director-General calls for immediate release, access to, and medical support for hostages taken by Hamas

On 25 October, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued the following [statement](#).

“We met today with families of people abducted from southern Israel on 7 October and heard firsthand the tragedy, trauma and suffering they are facing,” said Dr Tedros. “There is an urgent need for the captors of the hostages to provide signs of life, proof of provision of health care and the immediate release, on humanitarian and health grounds, of all those abducted.”

“Many of the hostages, including children, women and the elderly, have pre-existing health conditions requiring urgent and sustained care and treatment. The mental health trauma that the abducted, and the families, are facing is acute and psychosocial support is of great importance.”

Dr Tedros said the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) should be granted immediate access to the hostages to understand their health status. WHO stands ready to provide

the ICRC, which is mandated to provide support to hostages in conflict situations, with any health support for the hostages, Dr Tedros added.

“I thank the families for sharing their heartbreaking stories. I committed, on behalf of WHO, to do all we can to support the health and humanitarian needs of those being held captive. All civilians who are suffering in this conflict must be protected.”

Dr Tedros added: “We will do everything in our power as WHO to protect and promote the health of all people as that is the mission of our Organization: to care for each and everybody’s health no matter the conditions and circumstances,” said Dr Tedros. “We call on WHO Member States, humanitarian partners, all other relevant parties, and the public at large to put the health of people first and foremost in their minds and take immediate action to end the ongoing suffering.”

XLII. General Assembly emergency special session adopts resolution on protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations

On 27 October, the General Assembly 10th Emergency Special Session adopted resolution [A/RES/ES-10/21](#) by a recorded vote of 120 in favour to 14 against, with 45 abstentions.

Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations

The General Assembly,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Recalling its relevant resolutions regarding the question of Palestine,

Reaffirming the obligation to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law in all circumstances in accordance with article 1 of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949,

Recalling the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, 446 (1979) of 22 March 1979, 452 (1979) of 20 July 1979, 465 (1980) of 1 March 1980, 476 (1980) of 30 June 1980, 478 (1980) of 20 August 1980, 904 (1994) of 18 March 1994, 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002, 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003, 1850 (2008) of 16 December 2008, 1860 (2009) of 8 January 2009 and 2334 (2016) of 23 December 2016,

Recalling also Security Council resolutions on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, including on children and armed conflict,

Expressing grave concern at the latest escalation of violence since the 7 October 2023 attack and the grave deterioration of the situation in the region, in particular in the Gaza Strip and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel,

Condemning all acts of violence aimed at Palestinian and Israeli civilians, including all acts of terrorism and indiscriminate attacks, as well as all acts of provocation, incitement and destruction,

Recalling the need to uphold the principles of distinction, necessity, proportionality and precaution in the conduct of hostilities,

Emphasizing that civilians must be protected, in accordance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and deploring in this regard the heavy civilian casualties and widespread destruction,

Emphasizing also the need to pursue accountability, and stressing in this regard the importance of ensuring independent and transparent investigations in accordance with international standards,

Expressing grave concern at the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and at its vast consequences for the civilian population, largely comprising children, and underlining the need for full, immediate, safe, unhindered and sustained humanitarian access,

Expressing strong support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and for his calls for the immediate and unrestricted access of humanitarian aid to respond to the most basic needs of the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip, underlining the Secretary-General's message that food, water, medicine and fuel need to be sustained and at scale, and expressing its appreciation for the critical role played by Egypt in this regard,

Expressing strong support also for all regional and international efforts aimed at achieving an immediate cessation of hostilities, ensuring the protection of civilians and providing humanitarian aid,

1. *Calls* for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities;

2. *Demands* that all parties immediately and fully comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, particularly in regard to the protection of civilians and civilian objects, as well as the protection of humanitarian personnel, persons hors de combat, and humanitarian facilities and assets, and to enable and facilitate humanitarian access for essential supplies and services to reach all civilians in need in the Gaza Strip;

3. *Also demands* the immediate, continuous, sufficient and unhindered provision of essential goods and services to civilians throughout the Gaza Strip, including but not limited to water, food, medical supplies, fuel and electricity, stressing the imperative, under international humanitarian law, of ensuring that civilians are not deprived of objects indispensable to their survival;

4. *Calls* for immediate, full, sustained, safe and unhindered humanitarian access for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and other United Nations humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners, the International Committee of the Red Cross and all other humanitarian organizations upholding humanitarian principles and delivering urgent assistance to civilians in the Gaza Strip, encourages the establishment of humanitarian corridors and other initiatives to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians, and welcomes efforts in this regard;

5. Also *calls* for the rescinding of the order by Israel, the occupying Power, for Palestinian civilians and United Nations staff, as well as humanitarian and medical workers, to evacuate all areas in the Gaza Strip north of the Wadi Gaza and relocate to southern Gaza, recalls and reiterates that civilians are protected under international humanitarian law and should receive humanitarian assistance wherever they are, and reiterates the need to take appropriate steps to ensure the safety and well-being of civilians, in particular children, and their protection, and allowing their safe movement;

6. *Firmly rejects* any attempts at the forced transfer of the Palestinian civilian population;

7. *Calls* for the immediate and unconditional release of all civilians who are being illegally held captive, demanding their safety, well-being and humane treatment in compliance with international law;

8. Also *calls* for respect and protection, consistent with international humanitarian law, of all civilian and humanitarian facilities, including hospitals and other medical facilities, as well as their means of transport and equipment, schools, places of worship and United Nations facilities, as well as all of humanitarian and medical personnel and journalists, media professionals and associated personnel, in armed conflict in the region;

9. *Stresses* the particularly grave impact that armed conflict has on women and children, including as refugees and displaced persons, as well as on other civilians who may have specific vulnerabilities, including persons with disabilities and older persons;

10. Also *stresses* the need to urgently establish a mechanism to ensure the protection of the Palestinian civilian population, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions;

11. Further *stresses* the importance of a humanitarian notification mechanism to ensure the protection of United Nations facilities and all humanitarian installations, and to ensure the unimpeded movement of aid convoys;

12. *Emphasizes* the importance of preventing further destabilization and escalation of violence in the region, and in this regard calls upon all parties to exercise maximum restraint and upon all those with influence on them to work toward this objective;

13. *Reaffirms* that a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be achieved by peaceful means, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and in accordance with international law, and on the basis of the two-State solution;

14. *Decides* to adjourn the tenth emergency special session temporarily and to authorize the President of the General Assembly at its most recent session to resume its meeting upon request from Member States.

XLIII. Secretary-General warns that as the bombing intensifies, the humanitarian system in Gaza is facing total collapse

On 27 October, the Secretary-General António Guterres made the following [statement](#).

The humanitarian system in Gaza is facing a total collapse with unimaginable consequences for more than 2 million civilians.

As the bombing intensifies, needs are growing ever more critical and colossal.

About 500 trucks per day were crossing into Gaza before the hostilities began.

In recent days, an average of only 12 trucks per day have entered, despite needs being far greater than at any time before.

In addition, the supplies that have trickled in do not include fuel for United Nations operations – fuel which is also essential to power hospitals, water desalination plants, food production and aid distribution.

Given the desperate and dramatic situation, the United Nations will not be able to continue to deliver inside Gaza without an immediate and fundamental shift in how aid is going in.

The verification system for the movement of goods through the Rafah crossing must be adjusted to allow many more trucks to enter Gaza without delay.

We must meet the expectations and core needs of civilians in Gaza.

Life-saving humanitarian aid – food, water, medicine, fuel – must be allowed to reach all civilians swiftly, safely and at scale.

I welcome the growing global consensus for a humanitarian pause in the conflict. I repeat my call for a humanitarian ceasefire, the unconditional release of all hostages, and the delivery of life-saving supplies at the scale needed.

Misery is growing by the minute.

Without a fundamental change, the people of Gaza will face an unprecedented avalanche of human suffering.

Everyone must assume their responsibilities. This is a moment of truth. History is judging us all.

XLIV. UNRWA Commissioner-General mourns loss of UNRWA staff in Gaza

On 30 October, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Philippe Lazzarini made [remarks](#) at the memorial service at the UNRWA Headquarters in Amman held in honour UNRWA Staff.

Thank you for joining this gathering today to remember and pay tribute to all our colleagues who have been so tragically killed over the past three weeks.

We have lost at least 59 colleagues, and it pains me greatly to know that there are likely many more deaths we still have to verify.

The colleagues killed were mothers and fathers, daughters and sons. Extraordinary people who dedicated their lives to their communities. They represented the best humanity has to offer – brave, compassionate, and devoted to the service of others.

Their deaths are a loss not only to those who knew and loved them, and to the Agency, but to humanity as a whole.

Losing so many colleagues in such a short time has left the Agency, and each of us, in a state of shock and profound grief. We will never be the same – their deaths leave a void at the heart of the Agency.

Despite this grave loss, I am humbled and amazed to see you all continue to do every day the difficult and heartbreaking work of providing protection and support to civilians in the most challenging circumstances.

Thousands of our colleagues, despite the fact that they share the same loss, fear, and daily struggle of millions of Gazans, put on their UN vest and go to work. They are our true heroes. They are the face of humanity during its darkest hours. I am deeply grateful to them and to you all.

I want you to know that the senior management and I are with you every step of the way. We will not give up our constant efforts to advocate for the protection of civilians and all UNRWA installations, and the uninterrupted flow of meaningful humanitarian aid to civilians, wherever they are in Gaza.

The UN family and the friends and supporters of UNRWA all over the world stand with us in our grief and in honouring our colleagues.”

XLV. UNRWA Commissioner-General briefs Security Council

On 30 October, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Philippe Lazzarini [briefed](#) the Security Council.

The last three weeks have been horrific. Almost everyone in Israel, the occupied Palestinian territory and the broader region is in mourning.

The horrific attacks by Hamas in Israel on 7 October were shocking.

The relentless bombardments by the Israeli Forces of the Gaza Strip are shocking.

The level of destruction is unprecedented, the human tragedy unfolding under our watch is unbearable.

One million people, half the population of Gaza, were pushed from the north of the Gaza Strip towards the south in three weeks.

The south, however, has not been spared from bombardment, with significant numbers killed.

I have said many times, and I will say it again “no place is safe in Gaza.”

Now, civilians remaining in the north are receiving evacuation notices from the Israeli forces, urging them south to receive scarce humanitarian assistance.

But many, including pregnant women, people with disabilities, the sick and the wounded, are unable to move.

What happened and continues to happen is forced displacement.

Over 670,000 displaced people are now in overcrowded UNRWA schools and buildings.

They live in appalling, unsanitary conditions, with limited food and water, sleeping on the floor without mattresses, or outside, in the open.

Hunger and despair are turning into anger against the international community, and in Gaza, the international community is better known as UNRWA.

Mr. President,

Nearly 70 per cent of those reported killed are children and women.

Save the Children reported yesterday that nearly 3,200 children were killed in Gaza in just three weeks. This surpasses the number of children killed annually across the world's conflict zones since 2019.

This cannot be "collateral damage."

Churches, mosques, hospitals, and UNRWA facilities, including those sheltering displaced people, have not been spared.

Too many people have been killed and injured whilst seeking safety in places protected by international humanitarian law.

The current siege imposed on Gaza is collective punishment.

Two weeks of full siege followed by the trickle of aid last week mean that:

- Basic services are crumbling.
- Medicine is running out.
- Food and water are running out.
- Fuel is running out.

The streets of Gaza have started overflowing with sewage, which will cause a massive health hazard very soon.

In the latest blow, the communications blackout over the weekend has aggravated the panic and distress of people.

The blackout meant that:

- People could not communicate with their loved ones inside Gaza to know who is dead and who is alive.
- They no longer knew whether they would receive bread from UNRWA.
- They felt abandoned and cut off from the rest of the world.

The communication blackout has accelerated the breaking down of civil order.

Panic pushed thousands of desperate people to head to the UNRWA warehouse and distribution centres where we store the food and other supplies we started receiving via Egypt last week.

A further breakdown in civil order will make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the largest UN Agency in Gaza to continue operating. It will also make it impossible to bring in convoys.

I say this while being fully aware that UNRWA is the last remaining lifeline for the Palestinian people in Gaza.

Members of the Council,

UNRWA is calling on you for support.

I lost 64 colleagues in just over three weeks. The last tragic passing was 2 hours ago. Samir, Head of Security and Safety in the middle region was killed with his wife and eight children.

This is the highest number of UN aid workers killed in a conflict in such a short time.

My 13,000 colleagues in Gaza are from a community of 1.7 million Palestine Refugees, out of 2.2 million residents of the Gaza Strip.

Those who are alive, have, for the most part, lost relatives, friends, neighbours and are displaced like the majority of Gazans.

Many of my own colleagues now live, sleep and work in UNRWA shelters.

And yet, they are showing exceptional dedication to UN values. No words can do justice to thousands of UNRWA staff who continue to work tirelessly to support their community.

These are teachers, doctors, social workers, engineers and support staff. They are mothers and fathers. If they were not in Gaza, they could have been your neighbours, your friends.

They are operating 150 UNRWA shelters.

They are keeping one-third of our health centres open and run 80 mobile health teams.

They support the entry of humanitarian convoys and the storage and distribution of aid.

They distribute the little fuel we have left to hospitals, bakeries and shelters.

My UNRWA colleagues are the only glimmer of hope for the entire Gaza Strip, a ray of light as humanity sinks into its darkest hour.

But they are running out of fuel, out of water, out of food and medicine and will soon be unable to operate.

Let me be clear – the handful of convoys being allowed through Rafah is nothing compared to the needs of over 2 million people trapped in Gaza.

The system in place to allow aid into Gaza is geared to fail unless there is political will to make the flow of supplies meaningful, matching the unprecedented humanitarian needs.

Mr. President,

Gaza has over 2 million people, half of them children.

Gazans are vibrant, educated people who aspire to have normal lives, families, children, education, and dreams of a better future.

Today, Gazans feel that they are not treated as other civilians. Most of them feel trapped in a war they have nothing to do with! They feel the world is equating all of them to Hamas.

This is dangerous. And we know this too well from previous conflicts and crises.

An entire population is being de-humanized.

The atrocities of Hamas do not absolve the State of Israel from its obligations under International Humanitarian Law.

Every war has rules, and this one is no exception.

Hannah Arendt said, “The death of human empathy is one of the first and most revealing signs of a culture that is about to fall into barbarity.”

More than ever, Gazans deserve our empathy.

Its absence will deepen the polarization in the region and further push away any prospect of peace.

While a lot of the focus is on Gaza, I wish to reiterate that another crisis is unfolding in the West Bank including East Jerusalem.

The United Nations has been sounding the alarm for months on the increased violence.

Palestinian fatalities this year are the highest since the UN started to keep records in 2005. At least 115 Palestinians have been killed since 7 October, including 33 children.

The movement restrictions imposed across the West Bank are impacting our services, including schools and health centres.

Meanwhile, the situation on the Israeli Lebanese border is getting worse, with regular exchanges of fire and civilian casualties reported.

In conclusion, I am very worried about the potential spillover of this conflict beyond Gaza unless the following is enforced:

First, there must be strict adherence to international humanitarian law.

This means civilians and civilian infrastructure, including UN premises, schools, hospitals, places of worship, and shelters hosting civilians must be protected all over the Gaza Strip, north and south, and at all times.

This is not an option; it is an obligation.

Second, we need a safe, unimpeded, substantial and continuous flow of humanitarian aid, including fuel, into the Gaza strip and across it.

****For this we need an immediate humanitarian cease-fire. ****

Third, UNRWA still needs funds.

We have the necessary and largest presence on the ground, we can deliver if we have the means and the resources, including the finances to pay staff on the frontlines.

UNRWA has received generous contributions towards its initial flash appeal. But without a fully funded core budget we cannot pay salaries and deliver.

Finally,

In these dark times, we must not lose sight of our humanity.

Our empathy should apply to all. Palestinians, Israelis, Jews, Christians and Muslims.

The rules of war must be followed by all parties, at all times, in all places. Civilians must be protected, hostages released, and a genuine humanitarian response facilitated.

An immediate humanitarian ceasefire has become a matter of life and death for millions. The present and future of Palestinians and Israelis depend on it.

I urge all Member States to change the trajectory of this crisis, and work towards a genuine political solution.

Before it's too late, thank you.

XLVI. OCHA updates Security Council on the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza

On 30 October, the Chief of Humanitarian Financing and Resource Mobilization Division, of the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Lisa Doughten [briefed](#) the Security Council.

I am delivering this statement on behalf of Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary- General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Martin Griffiths, who is currently on mission in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The events that have unfolded since 7 October have been nothing short of devastating and heartbreaking.

We do not forget the 1,400 people killed and thousands more injured and taken in the brutal Hamas attack. Indiscriminate rocket-fire continues from Gaza into populated areas of Israel, causing more civilian casualties and displacement and trauma.

We deplore that 230 people [remain] held hostage in Gaza. All hostages must be released immediately and unconditionally. We welcome all diplomatic efforts to secure their release, and demand that, in the interim, they be treated humanely and be allowed to receive visits from the International Committee of the Red Cross.

As you have just heard from [UNRWA] Commissioner-General [Philippe] Lazzarini, the situation for the more than two million people trapped in the Gaza Strip is catastrophic.

They have now endured a siege and continuous bombardment for 23 days. According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, more than 8,000 people have been killed – 66 per cent of whom are said to be women and children. Tens of thousands more have been injured.

The scale of the horror people are experiencing in Gaza is really hard to convey. People are becoming increasingly desperate, as they search for food, water and shelter amid the relentless bombing campaign that is wiping out whole families and entire neighbourhoods.

In their desperation, people have resorted to breaking into UN warehouses in search of food and water. Dehydration is an increasing concern, as is the possibility of the spread of disease and other health concerns due to unsafe water and breakdown in sewage treatment services.

More than 1.4 million people are internally displaced in Gaza, and hundreds of thousands of children, women and men are crammed into overcrowded shelters and hospitals. Many of these people have moved south in search of safety. But the reality is that nowhere is safe and we simply don't have enough essential supplies to provide for the survival of internally displaced people at this scale.

As we heard from [UNICEF] Executive Director [Catherine] Russell, the health care system is in tatters. Patients lie on the floors and in corridors. Surgeons are operating without anaesthesia. Out of an estimated 50,000 pregnant women, 5,500 are due to deliver within the next 30 days. For the 1,000 patients dependent on dialysis and the 130 premature babies in incubators, life hangs by a thread as hospital backup generators run on fumes. Some 9,000 cancer patients are not receiving adequate care.

We are deeply concerned by allegations of military installations in the close vicinity of hospitals and the request by Israeli authorities for hospitals, including Al Quds and Shifa, to be evacuated – there is nowhere safe for these patients to go, and for those on life support and babies in incubators, moving would almost certainly be a death sentence.

The provision of humanitarian relief is extremely complex and challenging due to the bombardment, the destruction of infrastructure and – as we have said repeatedly – the lack of fuel. We mourn the loss of 64 UNRWA colleagues and other humanitarian staff who have been tragically killed, and we extend our deepest condolences to their families and colleagues.

We have the utmost admiration for the bravery, selflessness and commitment of humanitarian workers who are delivering aid to those in need in this perilous environment.

We welcome the agreement that has allowed us to get some relief into Gaza via the Rafah border crossing. But these deliveries are a drop in the ocean compared to the vast scale of needs.

It is imperative that we are able get humanitarian supplies and relief into Gaza safely, reliably, without impediment, and at the scale required. In particular, [it is] urgent for us to replenish fuel supplies, which are vital for powering most essential services, including hospitals and water desalination plants, and to transport humanitarian relief inside Gaza.

And more than one entry point into Gaza is indispensable if we are to make a difference – Kerem Shalom, between Israel and Gaza, is the only crossing equipped to rapidly process a sufficiently large number of trucks.

Meanwhile, in the West Bank, scores of civilians have been killed and incidents of settler violence have increased, causing hundreds of civilians to be displaced. Likewise, the violence and closure of checkpoints has impeded access to essential services and food distribution. The permits of some 150,000 to 175,000 Palestinians from the West Bank working in Israel and settlements are now suspended. The situation is causing significant damage to the West Bank economy and Palestinian institutions.

We have very real fears about what lies ahead. The current situation may pale in comparison with what is to come. There is a genuine risk that this war could escalate further and spillover into [the] wider region. We must take urgent collective action to prevent this.

In light of all that has been described today, what we are calling for is for the parties to agree to pause the fighting on humanitarian grounds. It would provide the required calm and safety for hostages to be released, and for the UN to replenish supplies, relieve exhausted personnel, and resume assistance throughout Gaza wherever civilians are in need. It would also provide much-needed respite to civilians who are living under unimaginably traumatic conditions.

But with or without a pause in the fighting, I reiterate that all parties – on all sides – must respect international humanitarian law. This means allowing relief in and taking constant care to spare civilians and civilian objects, including humanitarian and medical workers, facilities and assets. And this applies whether civilians move or they stay.

We are relying on the responsibility of every Member State here and across the UN to use all of their influence to ensure that the rules of war are respected and that as far as is possible, civilians are spared further suffering.

XLVII. Secretary-General calls for immediate humanitarian ceasefire, unimpeded access

On 31 October, Secretary-General António Guterres made the following [statement](#).

I am deeply alarmed by the intensification of the conflict between Israel and Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups in Gaza. This includes the expansion of ground operations by the Israel Defence Forces accompanied by intense air strikes, and the continued rocket fire towards Israel from Gaza.

Civilians have borne the brunt of the current fighting from the outset. Protection of civilians on both sides is paramount and must be respected at all times.

I repeat my utter condemnation of the acts of terror perpetrated by Hamas on 7 October. There is never any justification for the killing, injuring and abduction of civilians. I appeal for the immediate and unconditional release of those civilians held hostage by Hamas.

I condemn the killing of civilians in Gaza and I am dismayed by reports that two-thirds of those who have been killed are women and children.

I mourn and honour the United Nations colleagues who have tragically been killed in the bombardment of Gaza over the past three weeks. My heart goes out to the families of our colleagues who lost their lives in service.

International humanitarian law establishes clear rules that cannot be ignored. It is not an a la carte menu and cannot be applied selectively.

All parties must abide by it, including the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution.

With too many Israeli and Palestinian lives already lost, this escalation only increases the immense suffering of civilians.

The level of humanitarian assistance that has been allowed into Gaza up to this point is completely inadequate and not commensurate with the needs of people in Gaza, compounding the humanitarian tragedy.

I reiterate my call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and for unimpeded humanitarian access to be granted consistently, safely and to scale in order to meet the urgent needs created by the catastrophe unfolding in Gaza.

I remain deeply concerned about the risk of a dangerous escalation beyond Gaza and urge all leaders to exercise utmost restraint to avoid a wider conflagration.