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relevant to the question of Palestine

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I. UN Human Rights Chief describes resumption of hostilities in Gaza as “catastrophic”

On 1 December, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk issued this [statement](#).

The resumption of hostilities in Gaza is catastrophic. I urge all parties and States with influence over them to redouble efforts, immediately, to ensure a ceasefire – on humanitarian and human rights grounds.

Recent comments by Israeli political and military leaders indicating that they are planning to expand and intensify the military offensive are very troubling.

Since 7 October, thousands of Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza. More now face the same fate. Others risk being forcibly displaced to already severely overcrowded and unsanitary parts of Gaza. The situation is beyond crisis point.

Under international humanitarian law, Israel as the occupying power, is required to ensure that the basic needs of the population in Gaza, such as food, water, and medical care, are met. I remind all parties of their obligation to allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need, throughout Gaza.

The way forward must be through an immediate end to the violence, the prompt and unconditional release of all remaining hostages, the cessation of firing of indiscriminate rockets and use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas, humanitarian aid commensurate to the immense need and rapid unimpeded access, an end to practices of arbitrary detention by Israel, and concrete steps to avert further disaster, founded on full respect and protection of the human rights of Palestinians and Israelis.

II. UN Secretary-General reiterates his call for a sustained humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza

On 4 December, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres issued the following [statement](#).

The Secretary-General is extremely alarmed by the resumption of hostilities between Israel and Hamas and other armed Palestinian groups in Gaza, on 1 December, including rocket fire towards Israel from Gaza and the renewal of ground operations and intensified airstrikes by the Israel Defence Forces, increasingly in southern Gaza. He calls on all parties to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law.

The UN continues to appeal to Israeli Forces to avoid further action that would exacerbate the already catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza and to spare civilians from more suffering. Civilians – including health workers, journalists and UN personnel – and civilian infrastructure must be protected at all times.

The Secretary-General reiterates the need for unimpeded and sustained humanitarian aid flow to meet the needs of the people throughout the Strip. For people ordered to evacuate, there is nowhere safe to go and very little to survive on.

The Secretary-General also remains gravely concerned about the escalation of violence in the occupied West Bank, including intensified Israeli security operations, high numbers of fatalities and arrests, spiking settler violence and attacks on Israelis by Palestinians.

The Secretary-General reiterates his call for a sustained humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza and the unconditional and immediate release of all remaining hostages.

III. UN Humanitarian Coordinator in OPT says the conditions required to deliver aid to the people of Gaza do not exist

On 4 December, United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory Lynn Hastings issued the following [statement](#).

The 7-day ceasefire brought respite to everyone; hostages were reunited with their families and desperately needed aid went into Gaza. We need more of this; all hostages released and considerably more aid and protection for Palestinian civilians.

But since the resumption of hostilities in Gaza on 1 December, 700 Palestinians have reportedly been killed in addition to the 15,500 already killed. Israeli military operations have expanded into southern Gaza, forcing tens of thousands of others into increasingly compressed spaces, desperate to find food, water, shelter and safety. Nowhere is safe in Gaza and there is nowhere left to go.

The conditions required to deliver aid to the people of Gaza do not exist. If possible, an even more hellish scenario is about to unfold, one in which humanitarian operations may not be able to respond. What we see today are shelters with no capacity, a health system on its knees, a lack of clean drinking water, no proper sanitation and poor nutrition for people already mentally and physically exhausted: a textbook formula for epidemics and a public health disaster.

The quantities of relief supplies and fuel allowed in are utterly insufficient. Despite the enormous efforts of the Egyptian and Palestinian Red Crescent Societies, UN agencies and other partners, the use of only the Rafah crossing – meant for pedestrians – to bring in trucks of goods does not work.

Humanitarian operations cannot be kept on a drip feed of fuel. It is the foundation of social services and our operations, including for hospitals, desalination plants, clean drinking water and sanitation. Space for the humanitarian response allowed inside Gaza is constantly shrinking. The two most important routes – the coastal road and Salahaddin road – are now cut off to our teams and trucks, hindering our ability to help people wherever they are.

The UN and NGOs alone cannot support a population of 2.2 million. Commercial and public sectors must be allowed to bring supplies into Gaza to restock markets. This must include fuel in a manner which ensures Israel's security.

Announcements of establishing so-called safe zones and tented cities without assurances that people will be able to move freely, and that assistance can be delivered where there is need are alarming. These zones cannot be safe nor humanitarian when unilaterally declared. The UN stands ready to work with all parties to expand the number of UN-managed safe shelters and to deliver assistance where it is needed.

IV. World Food Programme on the growing humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza

On 5 December, the World Food Programme issued the following [statement](#).

The resumption of hostilities in Gaza will only intensify the catastrophic hunger crisis that already threatens to overwhelm the civilian population.

The seven-day pause in fighting allowed the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and our partners some safety to scale up relief operations. In that time, we were able to double the number of distribution points outside shelters and deliver food in places that had been impossible to reach, including in some northern areas. WFP reached approximately 250,000 people in just one week.

Tragically, this desperately needed progress is now being lost. The renewed fighting makes the distribution of aid almost impossible and endangers the lives of humanitarian workers. Above all, it is a disaster for the civilian population of Gaza, more than 2 million people, whose only lifeline is food assistance.

Humanitarians must have safe, unimpeded, and sustained access, so we are able to distribute life-saving assistance throughout the territory. All parties must uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law.

But only a lasting peace can end the suffering and avert the looming humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. WFP calls for a humanitarian ceasefire and urges all leaders to work with the utmost urgency to find political solutions that can end the suffering of families on all sides of this harrowing conflict.

V. UNRWA Commissioner-General: “We are reaching a point of no return in Gaza”

On 6 December, UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini delivered the [statement](#) excerpted below at the virtual follow-up conference to the International Humanitarian Conference for the civilian population in Gaza.

...

The resumption and intensification of hostilities in Gaza is the darkest chapter yet of this catastrophic war. The Israeli Forces continue to order civilians to move south, while bombarding buildings and essential infrastructure across the Gaza Strip. At least 88 UNRWA premises have been hit, sometimes directly. More than 250 people have been killed and more than 900 wounded while seeking protection under the blue flag. More than a million people have moved to the south of Wadi Gaza, where shelter and infrastructure are limited.

In the last few days, civilians in the South, in Khan Younis, were ordered to move further southwest to Rafah, at the border with Egypt. More than 600,000 people are being forced to evacuate the Middle and South of Gaza, including from our United Nations shelters. But where are they supposed to go? Certainly not to so-called “safe zones” – there is no such thing if declared unilaterally in a war zone.

Madame Minister,

In the next 48 hours, there will likely be 22,000 people per square kilometer in Rafah governorate. Tens of thousands are sleeping in the streets without adequate food, water, or sanitation. The aid entering Gaza is utterly insufficient. Since the war began, Gaza has received meagre supplies and strictly limited fuel. Bombardments and the siege have created conditions of life that are inhumane and degrading. An end to the fighting is imperative if we are to avert the decimation of Gaza and contain the spillover of this crisis. Indeed, tensions are rising across the region.

The West Bank is gripped by deadly violence not seen in 15 years. At the same time, the economy is collapsing. And in Beirut, where I am today, Palestine Refugees are deeply worried about the expansion of this war.

Madame la Ministre,

The humanitarian pause gave us a glimpse of what can be achieved when hostilities cease. We were able to increase the number of trucks going into the Strip and to deliver food, water, and medical supplies across Gaza, including to some of the most vulnerable people in the North. We restocked medicine and fuel supplies for some hospitals and repaired some critical infrastructure. But the renewed hostilities are strangling the humanitarian response.

We must prevent further loss of civilian lives, including those sheltered under the UN flag and in other public infrastructure. For this, international humanitarian law must be truly respected, not reinterpreted. Humanitarian organizations must be able to work unhindered and aid, including fuel, should be meaningful, uninterrupted, and unconditional.

The siege must end, and we need an enduring humanitarian ceasefire. But aid agencies alone cannot cover the needs of more than two million people. Commercial goods must be allowed into Gaza. All crossings must be open, especially crossing points with Israel like Kerem Shalom. The entire Strip, including the North and Khan Younis, must be accessible.

Last, but not least, UNRWA still needs funds. It is the primary organisation providing life-saving aid to over 2.2 million people in Gaza. Of the 1.9 million people currently displaced, a staggering 1.2 million now shelter in our facilities. Donors have been generous, but humanitarian needs are outpacing our fundraising efforts. Our flash appeal for Gaza remains half funded. We still need 246 million dollars to cover urgent humanitarian needs. We still need an additional 50 million dollars for our core budget until the end of this month, including to pay the salaries of staff on the frontlines in Gaza.

Madame la Ministre,

We are reaching a point of no return in Gaza, where the blatant disregard for international humanitarian law scars our collective conscience.

States must find the political will to end this tragedy. Failing to act now and stop the carnage will forever stain our credibility as representatives of the international community, and fuel endless cycles of violence that will eventually engulf us all.

Thank you.

VI. UN Secretary-General under Chapter 99 urges Security Council to act over Israel-Palestine crisis as threat to international peace and security

On 6 December, Secretary-General António Guterres sent this [letter](#) to the President of the Security Council José Javier de la Gasca Lopez Domínguez.

I am writing under [Article 99](#) of the United Nations Charter to bring to the attention of the Security Council a matter which, in my opinion, may aggravate existing threats to the maintenance of international peace and security.

More than eight weeks of hostilities in Gaza and Israel have created appalling human suffering, physical destruction and collective trauma across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

More than 1,200 people were brutally killed, including 33 children, and thousands were injured in the abhorrent acts of terror by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups on 7 October 2023, which I have repeatedly condemned. Some 250 people were abducted, including 34 children, more than 130 of whom are still captive. They must be immediately and unconditionally released. Accounts of sexual violence during the attacks are appalling.

Civilians throughout Gaza face grave danger. Since the start of Israel's military operation, more than 15,000 people have reportedly been killed, over 40 per cent of whom were children. Thousands of others have been injured. More than half of all homes have been destroyed. Some 80 per cent of the population of 2.2 million has been forcibly displaced, into increasingly smaller areas. More than 1.1 million people have sought refuge in UNRWA facilities across Gaza, creating overcrowded, undignified, and unhygienic conditions. Others have nowhere to shelter and find themselves on the street. Explosive remnants of war are rendering areas uninhabitable. There is no effective protection of civilians.

The health care system in Gaza is collapsing. Hospitals have turned into battlegrounds. Only 14 hospitals out of 36 facilities are even partially functional. The two major hospitals in south Gaza are operating at three times their bed capacity and are running out of basic supplies and fuel. They are also sheltering thousands of displaced persons. Under these circumstances, more people will die untreated in the coming days and weeks.

Nowhere is safe in Gaza.

Amid constant bombardment by the Israel Defense Forces, and without shelter or the essentials to survive, I expect public order to completely break down soon due to the desperate conditions, rendering even limited humanitarian assistance impossible. An even worse situation could unfold, including epidemic diseases and increased pressure for mass displacement into neighbouring countries.

In Resolution 2712 (2023), the Security Council "calls for the scaling up of the provision of such supplies to meet the humanitarian needs of the civilian population, especially children."

The current conditions are making it impossible for meaningful humanitarian operations to be conducted. We are, nevertheless, preparing options for monitoring the implementation of the resolution, even if we recognize that in the present circumstances, that is untenable.

While delivery of supplies through Rafah continues, quantities are insufficient and have dropped since the pause came to an end. We are simply unable to reach those in need inside Gaza. The capacity of the United Nations and its humanitarian partners has been decimated by supply shortages, lack of fuel, interrupted communications, and growing insecurity. Humanitarian personnel have joined the vast majority of Gazan civilians in evacuating to south Gaza ahead of advancing military operations. At least 130 UNRWA colleagues have been killed, many with their families.

We are facing a severe risk of collapse of the humanitarian system. The situation is fast deteriorating into a catastrophe with potentially irreversible implications for Palestinians as a whole and for peace and security in the region. Such an outcome must be avoided at all cost.

The international community has a responsibility to use all its influence to prevent further escalation and end this crisis. I urge the members of the Security Council to press to avert a humanitarian catastrophe.

I reiterate my appeal for a humanitarian ceasefire to be declared. This is urgent. The civilian population must be spared from greater harm. With a humanitarian ceasefire, the means of survival can be restored, and humanitarian assistance can be delivered in a safe and timely manner across the Gaza Strip.

VII. UN General Assembly adopts resolutions on Palestine refugees, UNRWA, human rights, settlements

On 7 December, the General Assembly adopted the following resolutions: “Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East” ([A/RES/78/73](#)), “Assistance to Palestine Refugees” ([A/RES/78/74](#)), “Palestine refugees’ properties and their revenues” ([A/RES/78/75](#)), “Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories” ([A/RES/78/76](#)) and “Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan” ([A/RES/78/78](#)). The texts and voting results are replicated below.

78/73. Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions [194 \(III\)](#) of 11 December 1948, [212 \(III\)](#) of 19 November 1948, [302 \(IV\)](#) of 8 December 1949 and all subsequent related resolutions, including its resolution [77/122](#) of 12 December 2022,

Recalling also the relevant resolutions of the Security Council,

Having considered the report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2022,¹

Taking note of the letter dated 21 June 2023 from the Chair of the Advisory Commission of the Agency addressed to the Commissioner-General,²

Underlining that, at a time of heightened conflict and instability in the Middle East, the Agency continues to play a vital role in ameliorating the plight of the Palestine refugees through the provision of, inter alia, essential education, health, relief and social services programmes and emergency assistance to a registered population of more than 5.9 million refugees whose situation is extremely precarious, in mitigating the consequences of alarming trends in the Agency’s areas of operation, including increasing violence, marginalization and poverty and the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and in providing a crucial measure of stability in the region,

Recalling its resolutions [2252 \(ES-V\)](#) of 4 July 1967 and [2341 B \(XXII\)](#) of 19 December 1967 and all subsequent related resolutions, recalling also Security Council resolutions [237 \(1967\)](#) of 14 June 1967 and [259 \(1968\)](#) of 27 September 1968, stressing the necessity of an accelerated return of displaced persons, and calling for compliance with the mechanism agreed upon by the parties in article XII of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of 13 September 1993³ on the return of displaced persons,

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-eighth Session, Supplement No. 13 ([A/78/13](#)); and*

² *Ibid., Supplement No. 13 ([A/78/13](#)), pp. 7–9.*

³ [A/48/486-S/26560](#), annex.

Deeply concerned about the extremely critical financial situation of the Agency, caused by the structural underfunding of the Agency, as well as by rising needs and expenditures resulting from the deterioration of the socioeconomic and humanitarian conditions and the conflicts and rising instability in the region and their significant negative impact on the ability of the Agency to deliver essential services to the Palestine refugees, including its emergency, recovery, reconstruction and development programmes in all fields of operation,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East,⁴ submitted pursuant to resolution [71/93](#) of 6 December 2016, and the request contained therein for broad consultations to explore all ways and means, including through voluntary and assessed contributions, to ensure that the Agency's funding is sufficient, predictable and sustained for the duration of its mandate, and considering the recommendations contained in the report,

Taking note also of the report of 31 May 2023 of the Commissioner-General, submitted pursuant to paragraph 57 of the report of the Secretary-General and in follow-up to the update to the special report of 3 August 2015 of the Commissioner-General,⁵ submitted pursuant to paragraph 21 of General Assembly resolution [302 \(IV\)](#), regarding the severe financial crisis of the Agency and the negative implications for the continued delivery of core Agency programmes to the Palestine refugees in all fields of operation,

Expressing appreciation for the efforts of donors and host countries to respond to the Agency's unprecedented financial crisis, including through generous, additional contributions and, where possible, continued increases in voluntary contributions and agreements for multi-year funding, while acknowledging the steadfast support of all other donors to the Agency,

Welcoming the contributions made to the Agency's emergency appeals, including for the Gaza Strip and for the Syrian Arab Republic, and calling urgently upon the international community to continue its support, since needs persist and these appeals remain severely underfunded,

Noting that contributions have not been predictable enough or sufficient to meet growing needs and remedy the persistent shortfalls, thereby undermining the Agency's operations and efforts to promote human development and meet Palestine refugees' basic needs, and stressing the need for further efforts to comprehensively address the recurrent funding shortfalls affecting the Agency's operations,

Recognizing the Agency's extensive efforts to rapidly develop innovative and diversified ways to address its financial shortfall and mobilize resources, including through the expansion of the donor base and partnerships with United Nations entities, international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society, including through special digital campaigns,

Commending the Agency for the measures taken to address the financial crisis, despite difficult operational circumstances, including through the implementation of the medium-term strategy for 2016–2022 and various internal measures to contain expenditures, reduce operational and administrative costs, maximize the use of resources and reduce the funding shortfalls, and expressing profound concern that, despite such measures, the Agency's programme budget, which is funded primarily by voluntary contributions from Member States and intergovernmental organizations, faces persistent shortfalls that continue to threaten the delivery of the Agency's core programmes of assistance to the Palestine refugees,

⁴ [A/71/849](#).

⁵ [A/70/272](#), annex.

Encouraging the Agency to sustain those reform efforts, while also taking all possible measures to protect and improve the quality of access to and the delivery of core programmes of assistance,

Recalling its resolution [65/272](#) of 18 April 2011, in which it requested the Secretary-General to continue to support the institutional strengthening of the Agency,

Stressing the need to support the Agency's capacity to uphold its mandate and to avert the serious humanitarian, political and security risks that would result from any interruption or suspension of its vital work,

Recognizing that the recurring and growing financial shortfalls directly affecting the sustainability of the Agency's operations need to be remedied by examining new funding modalities designed to put the Agency on a stable financial footing to enable it to effectively carry out its core programmes in accordance with its mandate and commensurate with humanitarian needs,

Welcoming the affirmation in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted by the General Assembly on 19 September 2016,⁶ that, inter alia, the Agency, along with other relevant organizations, requires sufficient funding to be able to carry out its activities effectively and in a predictable manner,

Bearing in mind the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,⁷ including the pledge that no one will be left behind, emphasizing that the Sustainable Development Goals apply to all, including refugees, and commending the efforts of the Agency's programmes to promote 10 of the 17 Goals, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General,

Welcoming the joint efforts of host countries and donors to mobilize support for the Agency, including through extraordinary ministerial meetings, inter alia, the extraordinary ministerial conference held in Rome on 15 March 2018, the ministerial meeting convened at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 26 September 2019, the extraordinary virtual ministerial pledging conference convened on 23 June 2020 and the most recent ministerial meetings held on 22 September 2022 and 21 September 2023, hosted by Jordan and Sweden, aimed at urgently addressing the Agency's funding shortfall and the need for predictable multi-year funding, expanding donor support for the Agency and reaffirming support for its mandate,

Recalling Articles 100, 104 and 105 of the Charter of the United Nations and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations,⁸

Recalling also the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel,⁹

Recalling further its resolutions [75/125](#) of 11 December 2020 on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel and [75/127](#) of 11 December 2020 on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, calling upon, inter alia, all States to ensure respect for and the protection of all humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel, to respect the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence

⁶ Resolution [71/1](#).

⁷ Resolution [70/1](#).

⁸ Resolution [22 A \(I\)](#).

⁹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2051, No. 35457.

for the provision of humanitarian assistance and to respect and ensure respect for the inviolability of United Nations premises,

Affirming the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,¹⁰ to the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem,

Aware of the continuing needs of the Palestine refugees in all fields of operation, namely Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the Occupied Palestinian Territory,

Gravely concerned about the extremely difficult socioeconomic conditions being faced by the Palestine refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly in the refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, as a result of the recurrent military operations, continuing prolonged Israeli closures, the construction of settlements and the wall, evictions, the demolition of homes and livelihood properties causing forced transfers of civilians, and the severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade, which have deepened unemployment and poverty rates among the refugees, with potentially lasting, long-term negative effects, while taking note of developments with regard to the situation of access there,

Concerned about plans and measures to interfere with or obstruct the operations of the Agency, including in East Jerusalem, contrary to international law and the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, and reiterating the need for the Agency to fully implement its mandate in support of Palestine refugees without interference, including in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Commending the health-care staff of the Agency for their dedication in responding to the profound stresses caused to the health system by the high number of Palestinian civilian casualties in the recent period in the Gaza Strip,

Commending also the important role played by the Agency throughout its areas of operations to help to prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19,

Expressing grave concern in this regard about the lasting impact on the humanitarian and socioeconomic situation of the Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip, including high rates of food insecurity, poverty, displacement and the depletion of coping capacities,

Recalling the temporary tripartite agreement facilitated by the United Nations in September 2014, and stressing the urgent need for the lifting of all Israeli closures and restrictions on the Gaza Strip,

Recalling also its resolution [ES-10/18](#) of 16 January 2009 and Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#) of 8 January 2009, as well as the Agreement on Movement and Access of 15 November 2005,

Expressing concern about the continuing classroom shortage, including in the Gaza Strip, and the consequent negative impact on the right to education of refugee children,

Stressing the urgent need for the provision of the necessary humanitarian assistance and funding support for the advancement of reconstruction and recovery in the Gaza Strip, including by ensuring the timely facilitation of construction projects, including extensive shelter repair, and the need for the accelerated

¹⁰ Ibid., vol. 75, No. 973.

implementation of other urgent United Nations-led civilian reconstruction activities, and calling upon Israel to ensure the expedited and unimpeded import of all necessary construction materials into the Gaza Strip and to reduce the burdensome cost of importation of Agency supplies, while taking note of the continued implementation of the tripartite agreement facilitated by the United Nations,

Stressing also that the situation in the Gaza Strip is unsustainable and that a durable ceasefire agreement must lead to a fundamental improvement in the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, including through the sustained and regular opening of crossing points, and must ensure the safety and well-being of civilians on both sides,

Affirming the need to support the Palestinian Government in its assumption of full government responsibilities in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, in all fields, as well as through its presence at Gaza's crossing points,

Expressing deep concern at the critical situation of Palestine refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic and at the impact of the crisis on the Agency's installations and its ability to deliver its services, and regretting profoundly the loss of life and widespread displacement among refugees and the killing of staff members of the Agency in the crisis since 2012,

Emphasizing the continuing need for assistance to Palestine refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as those who have fled to neighbouring countries, including in particular Lebanon, where an unprecedented financial crisis is further affecting socioeconomic conditions among the refugees and exacerbating already high unemployment and poverty rates, and emphasizing the necessity of ensuring open borders for Palestine refugees fleeing the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic, consistent with the principles of non-discrimination and non-refoulement under international law, and recalling in this regard the statement by the President of the Security Council of 2 October 2013¹¹ and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants,

Aware of the valuable work done by the Agency in providing protection to the Palestinian people, in particular Palestine refugees, and recalling the need for the protection of all civilians in situations of armed conflict,

Deploring the endangerment of the safety of the Agency's staff and the damage and destruction caused to the facilities and properties of the Agency, and stressing the need to maintain the neutrality and safeguard the inviolability of United Nations premises, installations and equipment at all times,

Deploring also the breaches of the inviolability of United Nations premises, the failure to accord the property and assets of the Organization immunity from any form of interference, incursions or misuse, the failure to protect United Nations personnel, premises and property and any disruption caused to Agency operations by such violations,

Deploring further all attacks affecting United Nations installations, including Agency schools sheltering displaced civilians, and all other breaches of the inviolability of United Nations premises, including during the conflict in the Gaza Strip in July and August 2014, as reported in the summary by the Secretary-General of the report of the Board of Inquiry¹² and by the independent commission of inquiry

¹¹ [S/PRST/2013/15](#); see *Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council, 1 August 2013–31 July 2014* ([S/INF/69](#)).

¹² [S/2015/286](#), annex.

established pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution [S-21/1](#),¹³ and stressing the imperative of ensuring accountability,

Condemning the killing, injury and detention contrary to international law of Agency staff members,

Condemning also the killing, wounding and detention contrary to international law of refugee children and women,

Affirming the need for accountability and compensation to victims of violations of international law in accordance with international standards by all sides,

Deeply concerned about the continuing imposition of restrictions on the freedom of movement and access of the Agency's staff, vehicles and goods, and the injury, harassment and intimidation of the Agency's staff, which undermine and obstruct the work of the Agency, including its ability to provide essential basic and emergency services,

Recalling the statement of 15 July 1999 and the declarations adopted on 5 December 2001 and on 17 December 2014¹⁴ by the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, including the call upon parties to facilitate the activities of the Agency, to guarantee its protection and to refrain from levying taxes and imposing undue financial burdens,

Aware of the agreement between the Agency and the Government of Israel,

Taking note of the agreement reached on 24 June 1994, embodied in an exchange of letters between the Agency and the Palestine Liberation Organization,¹⁵

1. *Reaffirms* that the effective functioning of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East remains essential in all fields of operation;

2. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Commissioner-General of the Agency, as well as to all the staff of the Agency, for their tireless efforts and valuable work, particularly in the light of the difficult conditions, instability and crises faced during the past year;

3. *Expresses special commendation* to the Agency for the essential role that it has played for more than seven decades since its establishment in providing vital services for the well-being, human development and protection of the Palestine refugees and the amelioration of their plight and for the stability of the region, and affirms the necessity for continuing the work of the Agency and its unimpeded operation and provision of services, pending the just resolution of the question of the Palestine refugees;

4. *Commends* the Agency for its extraordinary efforts, in cooperation with other United Nations agencies on the ground, to provide emergency humanitarian assistance, including shelter, food and medical aid, to refugees and affected civilians during periods of crisis and conflict, and recognizes its exemplary capacity to mobilize in emergency situations while continuously carrying out its core human development programmes;

¹³ See [A/HRC/29/52](#).

¹⁴ [A/69/711-S/2015/1](#), annex.

¹⁵ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No.13 (A/49/13)*, annex I.

5. *Endorses* in this regard the efforts of the Commissioner-General of the Agency to continue to provide humanitarian assistance, as far as practicable, on an emergency basis, and as a temporary measure, to persons in the area who are currently displaced and in serious need of continued assistance as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities, while reaffirming the right of all persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities to return to their homes or former places of residence in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967;

6. *Strongly appeals* to all Governments and to organizations and individuals to contribute generously to the Agency and to the other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned for the above-mentioned purpose;

7. *Expresses its grave concern* about attempts to discredit the Agency despite its proven operational capacity, record of effective provision of humanitarian and development assistance and consistent implementation of its mandate in accordance with relevant resolutions and its regulatory framework, even under the most difficult circumstances;

8. *Reaffirms* the Agency's important role in providing humanitarian and development assistance to Palestine refugees, engaging with international human rights mechanisms, as appropriate, and in doing so contributing to the protection and resilience of Palestinian civilians, as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General on the protection of the Palestinian civilian population,¹⁶ and contributing to regional stability;

9. *Expresses its appreciation* for the important support and cooperation provided by the host Governments to the Agency in the discharge of its duties;

10. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Advisory Commission of the Agency, and requests it to continue its efforts and to keep the General Assembly informed of its activities;

11. *Takes note* of the report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East¹⁷ and the efforts to assist in ensuring the financial security of the Agency, and requests the Secretary-General to provide the necessary services and assistance to the Working Group for the conduct of its work;

12. *Expresses its deep appreciation* to all donor countries and organizations that have, inter alia, sustained, accelerated or increased their contributions to the Agency, helping to alleviate its recurrent financial crises, to mitigate imminent risks to its core and emergency programming and to prevent an interruption of essential assistance to Palestine refugees;

13. *Commends* the Agency for its strategic plan and the Commissioner-General for his continuing efforts to increase the budgetary transparency and efficiency of the Agency, as reflected in the Agency's proposed programme budget for 2024;¹⁸

14. *Also commends* the Agency for sustaining its robust internal reform efforts, despite difficult operational circumstances, and recognizes its implementation of maximum efficiency procedures to contain

¹⁶ [A/ES-10/794](#).

¹⁷ [A/78/314](#).

¹⁸ [A/78/6 \(Sect. 26\)](#).

expenditures, reduce operational and administrative costs, reduce its funding shortfalls and maximize the use of resources;

15. *Calls upon* the Agency to further enhance its internal governance and oversight mechanisms to ensure that the Agency's management is delivering on its mandate with transparency and accountability, while preserving the Agency's agility and operational response capacity;

16. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the conclusions and recommendations contained therein, including the proposal for an increased assessed contribution from the regular budget of the United Nations;

17. *Decides* to consider a gradual increase in the United Nations regular budget allocation to the Agency that would, in addition to covering international staff requirements, in accordance with resolution [3331 B \(XXIX\)](#) of 17 December 1974, be utilizable to support expenses for operational costs related to executive and administrative management functions of the Agency, and invites the Secretary-General, accordingly, to submit proposals for consideration by the relevant committees at its seventy-ninth session;

18. *Appeals* to States and organizations for the maintenance of their voluntary contributions to the Agency, as well as an increase in contributions where possible, in particular to the Agency's programme budget, including in the consideration of their allocation of resources for international human rights, peace and stability, development and humanitarian efforts, to support the Agency's mandate and its ability to meet the rising needs of the Palestine refugees and essential associated costs of operations;

19. *Appeals* to States and organizations not currently contributing to the Agency to urgently consider making voluntary contributions in response to the calls of the Secretary-General for expansion of the Agency's donor base, in order to stabilize funding and ensure greater sharing of the financial burden of supporting the Agency's operations, in accordance with the continuing responsibility of the international community as a whole to assist the Palestine refugees;

20. *Calls for* the provision by donors of early annual voluntary contributions, less earmarking, and multi-year funding, in line with the Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing announced at the World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul, Turkey, in May 2016, in order to enhance the Agency's ability to plan and implement its operations with a greater degree of assurance regarding resource flows;

21. *Also calls for* the full and timely funding by donors of the Agency's emergency, recovery and reconstruction programmes as set out in its appeals and response plans;

22. *Requests* the Commissioner-General to continue efforts to maintain and increase traditional donor support and to enhance income from non-traditional donors, including through partnerships with public and private entities;

23. *Encourages* the Agency to explore financing avenues in relation to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;¹⁹

24. *Urges* States and organizations to actively pursue partnerships with and innovative support for the Agency, including as recommended in paragraphs 47, 48 and 50 of the report of the Secretary-General,²⁰

¹⁹ See resolution [70/1](#).

²⁰ [A/71/849](#).

including through the establishment of endowments, trust funds or revolving fund mechanisms and assistance to the Agency to access humanitarian, development and peace and security trust funds and grants;

25. *Welcomes* pledges by States and organizations to provide diplomatic and technical support to the Agency, including engagement with international and financial development institutions, including the World Bank and the Islamic Development Bank, and, where appropriate, to facilitate support for the establishment of financing mechanisms that can provide assistance to refugees and in fragile contexts, including to meet the needs of the Palestine refugees, and calls for serious follow-up efforts;

26. *Urges* States and organizations to provide contributions to the waqf fund established by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation at the Islamic Development Bank in support of Palestine refugees through enhanced support to the Agency;

27. *Encourages* further progress with regard to the creation of a World Bank multi-donor trust fund;

28. *Requests* the Agency to continue to implement efficiency measures through its medium-term strategy and the development of a five-year proposal for stabilizing the Agency's finances, including specific and time-bound measures, and to continue to improve its cost-efficiency and resource mobilization efforts;

29. *Calls upon* the members of the Advisory Commission and the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to consider the relevant recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General, including to help the Agency to address resource mobilization challenges and to actively assist the Commissioner-General in the efforts to create sustainable, sufficient and predictable support for the Agency's operations;

30. *Takes note* of the recommendations of the Secretary-General regarding the support provided to the Agency from the regular budget of the United Nations;

31. *Endorses* the efforts of the Commissioner-General to continue to provide humanitarian assistance, as far as is practicable, on an emergency basis and as a temporary measure, to persons in the area who are internally displaced and in serious need of continuing assistance as a result of recent crises in the Agency's fields of operation;

32. *Encourages* the Agency to provide increased assistance, in accordance with its mandate, to affected Palestine refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic as well as to those who have fled to neighbouring countries, as detailed in the Syrian regional crisis response plans, and calls upon donors to urgently ensure sustained support to the Agency in this regard in the light of the continuing grave deterioration of the situation and the growing needs of the refugees;

33. *Welcomes* the progress made thus far by the Agency in rebuilding the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp in northern Lebanon, and calls for donor funding to enable the expeditious completion of its reconstruction, for the continued provision of relief assistance to those displaced following its destruction in 2007 and for the alleviation of their ongoing suffering through the provision of the necessary support and financial assistance until the reconstruction of the camp is complete;

34. *Encourages* the Agency, in close cooperation with other relevant United Nations entities, to continue to make progress in addressing the needs, rights and protection of children, women and persons with disabilities in its operations, including through the provision of necessary psychosocial and

humanitarian support, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child,²¹ the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women²² and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;²³

35. *Also encourages* the Agency to continue to reduce the vulnerability and improve the self-reliance and resilience of Palestine refugees through its programmes;

36. *Recognizes* the acute protection needs of Palestine refugees across the region, and encourages the Agency's efforts to contribute to a coordinated and sustained response in accordance with international law, including the Agency's new protection strategic framework;

37. *Commends* the Agency for its humanitarian and psychosocial support programmes and other initiatives that provide recreational, cultural and educational activities for children in all fields, including in the Gaza Strip, recognizing their positive contribution, calls for full support for such initiatives by donor and host countries, and encourages the building and strengthening of partnerships to facilitate and enhance the provision of these services;

38. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply fully with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949;

39. *Also calls upon* Israel to abide by Articles 100, 104 and 105 of the Charter of the United Nations and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations in order to ensure the safety of the personnel of the Agency, the protection of its institutions and the safeguarding of the security of its facilities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, at all times;

40. *Urges* the Government of Israel to expeditiously reimburse the Agency for all transit charges incurred and other financial losses sustained as a result of the delays and restrictions on movement and access imposed by Israel;

41. *Calls upon* Israel particularly to cease obstructing the movement and access of the staff, vehicles and supplies of the Agency and to cease levying taxes, extra fees and charges, which affect the Agency's operations detrimentally;

42. *Reiterates its call upon* Israel to fully lift the restrictions impeding or delaying the import of necessary construction materials and supplies for the reconstruction and repair of the remaining damaged or destroyed refugee shelters, and for the implementation of suspended and urgently needed civilian infrastructure projects in refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, noting the alarming figures reflected in the United Nations country team reports of 26 August 2016, entitled "Gaza: two years after", and of July 2017, entitled "Gaza ten years later";

43. *Notes with appreciation* the positive contribution of the Agency's microfinance and job creation programmes, encourages efforts to enhance the sustainability and benefits of microfinance services to a greater number of Palestine refugees, especially in view of the high unemployment rates affecting them, and youth in particular, welcomes the Agency's efforts to streamline costs and increase microfinance services through internal reform efforts, and calls upon the Agency, in close cooperation with the relevant

²¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

²² *Ibid.*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

²³ *Ibid.*, vol. 2515, No. 44910.

agencies, to continue to contribute to the development of the economic and social stability of the Palestine refugees in all fields of operation;

44. *Reiterates its appeals* to all States, the specialized agencies, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to continue and to augment their contributions to the programme budget of the Agency, to increase their special allocations for grants and scholarships for higher education to Palestine refugees and to contribute to the establishment of vocational training centres for Palestine refugees, and requests the Agency to act as the recipient and trustee for the special allocations for grants and scholarships;

45. *Calls upon* the Commissioner-General to include, in the annual reporting to the General Assembly, assessments on the progress made to remedy the recurrent funding shortfalls of the Agency and ensure sustained, sufficient and predictable support for the Agency's operations, including through the implementation of the relevant provisions of the present resolution.

*45th plenary meeting
7 December 2023*

Adopted by 165 votes to 4, with 6 abstentions.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against: Canada, Israel, Micronesia (Federated States of), United States of America.

Abstentions: Cameroon, Guatemala, Kiribati, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu.

78/74. Assistance to Palestine refugees

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution [194 \(III\)](#) of 11 December 1948 and all its subsequent resolutions on the question, including resolution [77/123](#) of 12 December 2022,

Recalling also its resolution [302 \(IV\)](#) of 8 December 1949, by which, inter alia, it established the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East,

Recalling further the relevant resolutions of the Security Council,

Aware of the fact that, for more than seven decades, the Palestine refugees have suffered from the loss of their homes, lands and means of livelihood,

Affirming the imperative of resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees for the achievement of justice and for the achievement of lasting peace in the region,

Acknowledging the essential role that the Agency has played for more than seven decades since its establishment in ameliorating the plight of the Palestine refugees through the provision of education, health, relief and social services and ongoing work in the areas of camp infrastructure, microfinance, protection and emergency assistance,

Acknowledging also the commitment of the Agency to operate in line with the humanitarian principles of neutrality, humanity, independence and impartiality,

Taking note of the report of the Commissioner-General of the Agency covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2022,²⁴

Taking note also of the report of the Commissioner-General of 31 May 2023, submitted pursuant to paragraph 57 of the report of the Secretary-General,²⁵ and expressing concern regarding the severe financial crisis of the Agency and the negative implications for the continued delivery of core programmes to the Palestine refugees in all fields of operation,

Aware of the growing needs of the Palestine refugees throughout all the fields of operation, namely, Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Occupied Palestinian Territory,

Expressing grave concern at the especially difficult situation of the Palestine refugees under occupation, including with regard to their safety, well-being and socioeconomic living conditions,

Expressing grave concern in particular at the grave humanitarian situation and socioeconomic conditions of the Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip, and underlining the importance of emergency and humanitarian assistance and urgent reconstruction efforts,

Noting the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements on 13 September 1993 by the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization²⁶ and the subsequent implementation agreements,

1. *Notes with regret* that repatriation or compensation of the refugees, as provided for in paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution [194 \(III\)](#), has not yet been effected, and that, therefore, the situation of the Palestine refugees continues to be a matter of grave concern and the Palestine refugees continue to require assistance to meet basic health, education and living needs;

²⁴ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-eighth Session, Supplement No. 13* ([A/78/13](#)).

²⁵ [A/71/849](#).

²⁶ [A/48/486-S/26560](#), annex.

2. *Also notes with regret* that the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine has been unable to find a means of achieving progress in the implementation of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution [194 \(III\)](#), and reaffirms its request to the Conciliation Commission to continue exerting efforts towards the implementation of that paragraph and to report to the Assembly on the efforts being exerted in this regard as appropriate, but no later than 1 September 2024;

3. *Affirms* the necessity for the continuation of the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the importance of its unimpeded operation and its provision of services, including emergency assistance, for the well-being, protection and human development of the Palestine refugees and for the stability of the region, pending the just resolution of the question of the Palestine refugees;

4. *Calls upon* all donors to continue to strengthen their efforts to meet the anticipated needs of the Agency, including with regard to increased expenditures and needs arising from conflicts and instability in the region and the serious socioeconomic and humanitarian situation, particularly in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and those needs mentioned in recent emergency, recovery and reconstruction appeals and plans for the Gaza Strip and in the regional crisis response plans to address the situation of Palestine refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic and those Palestine refugees who have fled to countries in the region;

5. *Commends* the Agency for its provision of vital assistance to the Palestine refugees and its role as a stabilizing factor in the region and the tireless efforts of the staff of the Agency in carrying out its mandate.

*45th plenary meeting
7 December 2023*

Adopted by 168 votes to 1 with 10 abstentions.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against: Israel.

Abstentions: Cameroon, Guatemala, Kiribati, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, Paraguay, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu.

78/75. Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions [194 \(III\)](#) of 11 December 1948 and [36/146](#) C of 16 December 1981 and all its subsequent resolutions on the question,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to its resolution [77/124](#) of 12 December 2022,²⁷ as well as that of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine for the period from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023,²⁸

Recalling that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights²⁹ and the principles of international law uphold the principle that no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his or her property,

Recalling in particular its resolution [394 \(V\)](#) of 14 December 1950, in which it directed the Conciliation Commission, in consultation with the parties concerned, to prescribe measures for the protection of the rights, property and interests of the Palestine refugees,

Noting the completion of the programme of identification and evaluation of Arab property, as announced by the Conciliation Commission in its twenty-second progress report,³⁰ and the fact that the Land Office had a schedule of Arab owners and a file of documents defining the location, area and other particulars of Arab property,

Expressing its appreciation for the preservation and modernization of the existing records, including the land records, of the Conciliation Commission, and stressing the importance of such records for a just resolution of the plight of the Palestine refugees in conformity with resolution [194 \(III\)](#),

Recalling that, in the framework of the Middle East peace process, the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Government of Israel agreed, in the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of 13 September 1993,³¹ to commence negotiations on permanent status issues, including the important issue of the refugees,

1. *Reaffirms* that the Palestine refugees are entitled to their property and to the income derived therefrom, in conformity with the principles of equity and justice;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take all appropriate steps, in consultation with the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, for the protection of Arab property, assets and property rights in Israel;

²⁷ [A/78/305](#).

²⁸ [A/78/279](#).

²⁹ Resolution [217 A \(III\)](#).

³⁰ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Nineteenth Session, Annexes, Annex No. 11*, document [A/5700](#).

³¹ [A/48/486-S/26560](#), annex.

3. *Calls once again upon* Israel to render all facilities and assistance to the Secretary-General in the implementation of the present resolution;

4. *Calls upon* all the parties concerned to provide the Secretary-General with any pertinent information in their possession concerning Arab property, assets and property rights in Israel that would assist him in the implementation of the present resolution;

5. *Urges* the Palestinian and Israeli sides, as agreed between them, to deal with the important issue of Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues within the framework of the final status peace negotiations;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

Adopted by 163 votes to 5 with 9 abstentions.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against: Canada, Israel, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, United States of America.

Abstentions: Cameroon, Guatemala, Kiribati, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Togo, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.

78/76. Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

The General Assembly,

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

Guided also by international humanitarian law, in particular the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,³² as well as international standards of human rights, in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights³³ and the International Covenants on Human Rights,³⁴

Recalling its relevant resolutions and the relevant resolutions of the Human Rights Council,

Recalling also the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, including resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) of 23 December 2016,

Taking into account the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,³⁵ and recalling in this regard its resolution [ES-10/15](#) of 20 July 2004,

Recalling the statement of 15 July 1999 and the declarations adopted on 5 December 2001 and on 17 December 2014³⁶ by the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, and welcoming initiatives by States parties, both individually and collectively, according to article 1 of the Convention and aimed at ensuring respect for the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Recalling also its resolution [58/292](#) of 6 May 2004,

Convinced that occupation itself represents a grave violation of human rights, and deeply concerned by the ensuing persistent violations of international law committed by Israel, including international humanitarian and human rights law, including discriminatory policies against the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,³⁷

Gravely concerned by reports regarding serious human rights violations and grave breaches of international humanitarian law,

Taking note of the report of the independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,³⁸

Recalling the report of the independent international commission of inquiry established pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution [S-28/1](#),³⁹

Stressing the need for ensuring accountability for all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in order to end impunity, ensure justice, deter further violations, protect civilians and promote peace,

³² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

³³ Resolution [217 A \(III\)](#).

³⁴ Resolution [2200 A \(XXI\)](#), annex.

³⁵ See [A/ES-10/273](#) and [A/ES-10/273/Corr.1](#).

³⁶ [A/69/711-S/2015/1](#), annex.

³⁷ See [A/63/855-S/2009/250](#) and [A/HRC/12/48](#).

³⁸ [A/HRC/22/63](#).

³⁹ [A/HRC/40/74](#).

Having considered the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories⁴⁰ and the relevant reports of the Secretary-General,⁴¹

Recalling the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of 13 September 1993⁴² and the subsequent implementation agreements between the Palestinian and Israeli sides,

Noting the accession by Palestine to several human rights treaties and the core humanitarian law conventions, as well as other international treaties,

Stressing the urgency of bringing a complete end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, and an end to the violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people, and of allowing for the realization of their inalienable human rights, including their right to self-determination and their independent State, leading to a peaceful, just, lasting and comprehensive solution for the question of Palestine,

1. *Commends* the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, in spite of the obstruction of its mandate;

2. *Reiterates its demand* that Israel, the occupying Power, cooperate, in accordance with its obligations as a State Member of the United Nations, with the Special Committee in implementing its mandate, and regrets the continued lack of cooperation in this regard;

3. *Deplores* those policies and practices of Israel that violate the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories, as reflected in the report of the Special Committee covering the reporting period;

4. *Expresses grave concern* about the critical situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as a result of unlawful Israeli practices and measures, and especially condemns and calls for the immediate cessation of all illegal Israeli settlement activities and the construction of the wall, the lifting of the blockade of the Gaza Strip, as well as the complete cessation of the excessive and indiscriminate use of force and military operations against the civilian population, settler violence, provocations and incitements regarding the holy places, the destruction and confiscation of properties, the forced displacement of civilians, the detention and imprisonment of thousands of civilians, and all measures of collective punishment against the Palestinian civilian population;

5. *Requests* the Special Committee, pending complete termination of the Israeli occupation, to continue to investigate Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, especially Israeli violations of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to consult, as appropriate, with the International Committee of the Red Cross, according to its regulations, in order to ensure that the welfare and human rights of the peoples of the occupied territories, including prisoners and detainees, are safeguarded, as well as to submit to the Secretary-General annual reports on the current situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

⁴⁰ [A/78/553](#).

⁴¹ [A/78/502](#), [A/78/529](#) and [A/78/554](#).

⁴² [A/48/486-S/26560](#), annex.

6. *Also requests* the Special Committee to continue to investigate the treatment and status of the thousands of Palestinian and Arab prisoners and detainees, including children, women and elected representatives, in Israeli prisons and detention centres, and expresses grave concern about the harsh conditions of imprisonment and ill-treatment of prisoners and recent hunger strikes, stressing the need for respect for all applicable rules of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention,⁴³ the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules)⁴⁴ and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules);⁴⁵

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General:

(a) To provide the Special Committee with all necessary facilities, including those required for its visits to the occupied territories, so that it may investigate the Israeli policies and practices referred to in the present resolution;

(b) To utilize his good offices to facilitate and support the Special Committee in carrying out its mandate;

(c) To continue to task the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with assisting the Special Committee in the performance of its tasks;

(d) To circulate to Member States the annual reports mentioned in paragraph 5 above and ensure the widest availability of the reports of the Special Committee and of information regarding its activities and findings through the Department of Global Communications of the Secretariat.

Adopted by 86 votes to 12 with 75 abstentions.

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nicaragua, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Qatar, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against: Australia, Austria, Canada, Czechia, Guatemala, Hungary, Israel, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Papua New Guinea, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstentions: Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Haiti,

⁴³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

⁴⁴ Resolution [70/175](#), annex.

⁴⁵ Resolution [65/229](#), annex.

Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kiribati, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Sudan, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu.

78/78. Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan

The General Assembly,

Guided by the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and the need to respect the obligations arising from the Charter and other instruments and rules of international law,

Reaffirming the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including resolution [77/126](#) of 12 December 2022, as well as those resolutions adopted at its tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, including resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) of 22 November 1967, [446 \(1979\)](#) of 22 March 1979, [465 \(1980\)](#) of 1 March 1980, [476 \(1980\)](#) of 30 June 1980, [478 \(1980\)](#) of 20 August 1980, [497 \(1981\)](#) of 17 December 1981, [904 \(1994\)](#) of 18 March 1994 and [2334 \(2016\)](#) of 23 December 2016, and stressing the need for their implementation,

Recalling further the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,⁴⁶

Recalling the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,⁴⁷ the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights⁴⁸ and the Convention on the Rights of the Child,⁴⁹ and affirming that these human rights instruments must be respected in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Reaffirming the applicability of the Regulations annexed to the Hague Convention IV of 1907, the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,⁵⁰ and relevant provisions of customary law, including those codified in Additional Protocol I⁵¹ to the four Geneva Conventions,⁵² to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including the occupied Syrian Golan,

Affirming that the transfer by the occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies constitutes a breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention,⁵³

⁴⁶ Resolution [217 A \(III\)](#).

⁴⁷ See resolution [2200 A \(XXI\)](#), annex.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

⁵⁰ Ibid., vol. 75, No. 973.

⁵¹ Ibid., vol. 1125, No. 17512.

⁵² Ibid., vol. 75, Nos. 970–973.

⁵³ Ibid., No. 973.

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁵⁴ and recalling also General Assembly resolutions [ES-10/15](#) of 20 July 2004 and [ES-10/17](#) of 15 December 2006,

Noting that the International Court of Justice concluded that “the Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (including East Jerusalem) have been established in breach of international law”,⁵⁵

Taking note of the recent reports of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967,⁵⁶ as well as of other relevant recent reports of the Council,

Recalling the report of the independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,⁵⁷

Recalling also the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of 13 September 1993⁵⁸ and the subsequent implementation agreements between the Palestinian and Israeli sides,

Recalling further the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,⁵⁹ and emphasizing specifically its call for a freeze on all settlement activity, including so-called natural growth, and the dismantlement of all settlement outposts erected since March 2001, and the need for Israel to uphold its obligations and commitments in this regard,

Recalling its resolution [67/19](#) of 29 November 2012,

Noting the accession by Palestine to several human rights treaties and the core humanitarian law conventions, as well as other international treaties,

Aware that Israeli settlement activities involve, inter alia, the transfer of nationals of the occupying Power into the occupied territories, the confiscation of land, the forced transfer of Palestinian civilians, including Bedouin families, the exploitation of natural resources, the fragmentation of territory and other actions against the Palestinian civilian population and the civilian population in the occupied Syrian Golan that are contrary to international law,

Bearing in mind the extremely detrimental impact of Israeli settlement policies, decisions and activities on the ongoing regional and international efforts to resume and advance the peace process, on the prospects for the achievement of peace in the Middle East in accordance with the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, and on the viability and credibility of that solution,

Condemning settlement activities by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as violations of international humanitarian law, relevant United Nations

⁵⁴ See [A/ES-10/273](#) and [A/ES-10/273/Corr.1](#).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, advisory opinion, para. 120.

⁵⁶ [A/HRC/53/59](#); see also [A/78/545](#).

⁵⁷ [A/HRC/22/63](#).

⁵⁸ [A/48/486-S/26560](#), annex.

⁵⁹ [S/2003/529](#), annex.

resolutions, the agreements reached between the parties and obligations under the Quartet road map and as actions in defiance of the calls by the international community to cease all settlement activities,

Deploing in particular Israel's construction and expansion of settlements in and around occupied East Jerusalem, including its so-called E-1 plan that aims to connect its illegal settlements around and further isolate occupied East Jerusalem, the continuing demolition of Palestinian homes and eviction of Palestinian families from the city, the revocation of Palestinian residency rights in the city, and ongoing settlement activities in the Jordan Valley, all of which further fragment and undermine the contiguity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory,

Deploing the plans to demolish the Palestinian village of Khan al-Ahmar, in contravention of international law, which would have serious consequences with regard to the displacement of its residents, severely threaten the viability of the two-State solution and undermine the prospect of peace, given the area's sensitive location and importance for preserving the contiguity of the Palestinian territory, and demanding the cessation of such plans,

Condemning the demolition by Israel, in contravention of international law, of Palestinian buildings in the neighbourhood of Wadi al-Hummus in the village of Sur Bahir, south of occupied East Jerusalem, and of homes in Masafer Yatta, as well as other coercive measures potentially leading to the forced displacement and affecting over 1,200 Palestinian civilians,

Taking note of the Quartet report of 1 July 2016,⁶⁰ and stressing its recommendations, as well as its relevant statements in which the Quartet members concluded that, inter alia, the continuing policy of settlement construction and expansion, designation of land for exclusive Israeli use and denial of Palestinian development, including the recent high rate of demolitions, are steadily eroding the two-State solution,

Deploing the continuing unlawful construction by Israel of the wall inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and expressing its concern, in particular, about the route of the wall in departure from the Armistice Line of 1949 and in such a way as to include the great majority of the Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and which is causing humanitarian hardship and a serious decline of socioeconomic conditions for the Palestinian people, is fragmenting the territorial contiguity of the Territory and undermining its viability, and could prejudice future negotiations and make the two-State solution physically impossible to implement,

Condemning acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides, and recalling the need to end all acts of violence, including acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction,

Condemning also all acts of violence, destruction, harassment, provocation and incitement by Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, against Palestinian civilians, including children, and their properties, including historic and religious sites, and agricultural lands, as well as acts of terror by several extremist Israeli settlers, and calling for accountability for the illegal actions perpetrated in this regard,

Taking note of the relevant reports of the Secretary-General, including pursuant to Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#),⁶¹

⁶⁰ [S/2016/595](#), annex.

⁶¹ [A/78/502](#), [A/78/529](#) and [A/78/554](#).

1. *Reaffirms* that the Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan are illegal and an obstacle to peace and economic and social development;

2. *Demands* that Israel accept the de jure applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including the occupied Syrian Golan, and abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Convention, in particular article 49, and comply with all of its obligations under international law and cease immediately all actions causing the alteration of the character, status and demographic composition of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the occupied Syrian Golan;

3. *Reiterates its demand* for the immediate and complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and calls in this regard for the full implementation of all the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, including, inter alia, resolutions [446 \(1979\)](#), [452 \(1979\)](#) of 20 July 1979, [465 \(1980\)](#), [476 \(1980\)](#), [478 \(1980\)](#), [1515 \(2003\)](#) of 19 November 2003 and [2334 \(2016\)](#);

4. *Stresses* that a complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities is essential for salvaging the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders;

5. *Also stresses* the urgent need to reverse negative trends on the ground, including the building of settlements and the demolition of Palestinian homes, which are imperilling the viability of the two-State solution and entrenching a situation of unequal rights and discrimination, and are preventing the Palestinian people from exercising their fundamental rights;

6. *Recalls* the affirmation by the Security Council, in its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), that it will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations;

7. *Stresses* that the occupation of a territory is to be a temporary, de facto situation, whereby the occupying Power can neither claim possession nor exert its sovereignty over the territory it occupies, recalls in this regard the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of land by force and therefore the illegality of the annexation of any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes a breach of international law, undermines the viability of the two-State solution and challenges the prospects for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement, and expresses its grave concern at recent statements calling for the annexation by Israel of areas in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;

8. *Condemns* in this regard settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan and any activities involving the confiscation of land, the disruption of the livelihood of protected persons, the forced transfer of civilians and the annexation of land, whether de facto or through national legislation;

9. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations, as mentioned in the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice;

10. *Reiterates its call for* the prevention of all acts of violence, destruction, harassment and provocation by Israeli settlers, especially against Palestinian civilians and their properties, including historic and religious sites and including in Occupied East Jerusalem, and their agricultural lands;

11. *Calls for* accountability for the illegal actions perpetrated by Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, stresses in this regard the need for the implementation of Security Council resolution [904 \(1994\)](#), in which the Council called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to continue to take and implement measures, including the confiscation of arms, aimed at preventing illegal acts of violence by Israeli settlers, and called for measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians in the occupied territory, recalls in this regard the report of the Secretary-General on the protection of the Palestinian civilian population,⁶² and welcomes the Secretary-General's observations, including with respect to the expansion of existing protection mechanisms to prevent and deter violations;

12. *Stresses* the responsibility of Israel, the occupying Power, to investigate all acts of settler violence against Palestinian civilians and their properties and to ensure accountability for these acts and end prevailing impunity in this regard;

13. *Calls upon* all States and international organizations to continue to actively pursue policies that ensure respect for their obligations under international law with regard to all illegal Israeli practices and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly Israeli settlement activities;

14. *Calls for* measures of accountability, consistent with international law, in the light of continued non-compliance with the demands for a complete and immediate cessation of all settlement activities, which are illegal under international law, constitute an obstacle to peace and threaten to make a two-State solution impossible, stressing that compliance with and respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law is a cornerstone for peace and security in the region;

15. *Recalls*, in this regard, the statement of 15 July 1999 and the declarations adopted on 5 December 2001 and on 17 December 2014⁶³ by the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention on measures to enforce the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, welcomes in this regard initiatives by States parties, both individually and collectively, in accordance with article 1 of the Convention, aimed at ensuring respect for the Convention and accountability, and calls upon all High Contracting Parties to the Convention to continue, individually and collectively, to exert all efforts to ensure respect for its provisions by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967;

16. *Also recalls* that the Security Council, in its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), called upon all States to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967;

17. *Calls upon* all States, consistent with their obligations under international law and the relevant resolutions, not to recognize, and not to render aid or assistance in maintaining, the situation created by measures that are illegal under international law, including those aimed at advancing annexation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967;

18. *Calls upon* the relevant United Nations bodies to take all necessary measures and actions within their mandates to ensure full respect for and compliance with Human Rights Council resolution [17/4](#) of 16

⁶² [A/ES-10/794](#).

⁶³ [A/69/711-S/2015/1](#), annex.

June 2011,⁶⁴ concerning the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights⁶⁵ and other relevant international laws and standards, and to ensure the implementation of the United Nations “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework, which provides a global standard for upholding human rights in relation to business activities that are connected with Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution;

20. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-ninth session the item entitled “Israeli practices and settlement activities affecting the rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories”.

*45th plenary meeting
7 December 2023*

Adopted by 149 votes to 6 with 19 abstentions.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against: Canada, Hungary, Israel, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, United States of America.

Abstentions: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia, Guatemala, Haiti, Kiribati, Malawi, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, South Sudan, Togo, Tuvalu, Uruguay, Vanuatu.

⁶⁴ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 53 (A/66/53)*, chap. III, sect. A.

⁶⁵ [A/HRC/17/31](#), annex.

VIII. Security Council fails to adopt resolution demanding immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza on account of veto by United States

Below is the text of draft resolution ([S/2023/970](#)) which was not adopted by the Security Council during its meeting that took place on 8 December due to a negative vote cast by a Permanent Member (United States).

Afghanistan, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gambia, Grenada, Guyana, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, , Namibia, New Zealand Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen and Zimbabwe: draft resolution

The Security Council,

Recalling its resolutions on the situation on the Middle East,

Taking note of and acting upon the letter dated 6 December 2023 of the Secretary-General, under Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations, addressed to the President of the Security Council ([S/2023/962](#)),

Expressing grave concern over the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and the suffering of the Palestinian civilian population, and *emphasizing* that the Palestinian and Israeli civilian populations must be protected in accordance with international humanitarian law,

1. *Demands* an immediate humanitarian ceasefire;
2. *Reiterates* its demand that all parties comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, notably with regard to the protection of civilians;
3. *Demands* the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, as well as ensuring humanitarian access;
4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Council on an urgent and continuing basis on the state of implementation of the present resolution;
5. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

Voting Results

In favour: Albania, Brazil, China, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates.

Against: United States of America.

Abstentions: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

IX. General Assembly adopts resolution on Assistance to the Palestinian People

On 8 December, the General Assembly adopted Resolution [A/RES/78/121](#) without a vote. Its text is reproduced below.

78/121. Assistance to the Palestinian people

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution [77/30](#) of 6 December 2022, as well as its previous resolutions on the question,

Recalling also the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements in Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993, by the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,⁶⁶ and the subsequent implementation agreements concluded by the two sides,

Recalling further all relevant international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and, in particular, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,⁶⁷ the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,⁶⁸ the Convention on the Rights of the Child⁶⁹ and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,⁷⁰

Gravely concerned at the difficult living conditions and humanitarian situation affecting the Palestinian people, in particular women and children, throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly in the Gaza Strip where economic recovery and vast infrastructure repair, rehabilitation and development are urgently needed, especially in the aftermath of the conflict of July and August 2014,

Conscious of the urgent need for improvement in the economic and social infrastructure of the occupied territory,

Welcoming, in this context, the development of projects, notably on infrastructure, to revive the Palestinian economy and improve the living conditions of the Palestinian people, stressing the need to create the appropriate conditions to facilitate the implementation of these projects, and noting the contribution of partners in the region and of the international community,

Aware that development is difficult under occupation and is best promoted in circumstances of peace and stability,

Noting the great economic and social challenges facing the Palestinian people and their leadership,

⁶⁶ [A/48/486-S/26560](#), annex.

⁶⁷ See resolution [2200 A \(XXI\)](#), annex.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

⁷⁰ Ibid., vol. 1249, No. 20378.

Emphasizing the importance of the safety and well-being of all people, in particular women and children, in the whole Middle East region, the promotion of which is facilitated, inter alia, in a stable and secure environment,

Deeply concerned about the negative impact, including the health and psychological consequences, of violence on the present and future well-being of children in the region,

Conscious of the urgent necessity for international assistance to the Palestinian people, taking into account the Palestinian priorities, and recalling in this regard the National Early Recovery and Reconstruction Plan for Gaza,

Expressing grave concern about the grave humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, and underlining the importance of emergency and humanitarian assistance and the need for the advancement of reconstruction in the Gaza Strip,

Welcoming the results of the Conference to Support Middle East Peace, convened in Washington, D.C., on 1 October 1993, the establishment of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians and the work being done by the World Bank as its secretariat and the establishment of the Consultative Group, as well as all follow-up meetings and international mechanisms established to provide assistance to the Palestinian people,

Underlining the importance of the Cairo International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza, held on 12 October 2014, and urging the timely and full disbursement of pledges for expediting the provision of humanitarian assistance and the reconstruction process,

Recalling the International Donors' Conference for the Palestinian State, held in Paris on 17 December 2007, the Berlin Conference in Support of Palestinian Civil Security and the Rule of Law, held on 24 June 2008, and the Palestine Investment Conferences, held in Bethlehem from 21 to 23 May 2008 and on 2 and 3 June 2010, and the International Conference in Support of the Palestinian Economy for the Reconstruction of Gaza, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on 2 March 2009,

Welcoming the ministerial meetings of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development, convened in Tokyo in February 2013 and in Jakarta in March 2014, as a forum to mobilize political and economic assistance, including through exchanges of expertise and lessons learned, in support of Palestinian development,

Welcoming also the latest meetings of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, held in Brussels on 27 May 2015, in New York on 25 September 2013, 22 September 2014, 30 September 2015, 19 September 2016, 18 September 2017, 27 September 2018, 26 September 2019, by videoconference on 2 June 2020 and on 23 February 2021, in Oslo on 17 November 2021, in Brussels on 10 May 2022, in New York on 22 September 2022, in Brussels on 3 and 4 May 2023 and in New York on 20 September 2023,

Welcoming further the activities of the Joint Liaison Committee, which provides a forum in which economic policy and practical matters related to donor assistance are discussed with the Palestinian Authority,

Welcoming the implementation of the Palestinian National Development Plan 2011–2013 on governance, economy, social development and infrastructure and the adoption of the Palestinian National Development Plan 2014–2016: State-building to Sovereignty, and stressing the need for continued international support for the Palestinian State-building process, as outlined in the summary by the Chair of the meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee held on 22 September 2014,

Stressing the need for the full engagement of the United Nations in the process of building Palestinian institutions and in providing broad assistance to the Palestinian people,

Recognizing, in this regard, the positive contribution of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2014–2016, which is aimed, inter alia, at enhancing developmental support and assistance to the Palestinian people and strengthening institutional capacity in line with Palestinian national priorities,

Welcoming steps to ease the restrictions on movement and access in the West Bank, while stressing the need for further steps to be taken in this regard, and recognizing that such steps would improve living conditions and the situation on the ground and could promote further Palestinian economic development,

Welcoming also the tripartite agreement facilitated by the United Nations regarding access to the Gaza Strip, and calling for its full implementation and complementary measures that address the need for a fundamental change in policy that allows for the sustained and regular opening of the border crossings for the movement of persons and goods, including for humanitarian and commercial flows and for the reconstruction and economic recovery of Gaza,

Stressing that the situation in the Gaza Strip is unsustainable and that a durable ceasefire agreement must lead to a fundamental improvement in the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and ensure the safety and well-being of civilians on both sides,

Stressing also the urgency of reaching a durable solution to the crisis in Gaza through the full implementation of Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#) of 8 January 2009, including by preventing the illicit trafficking in arms and ammunition and by ensuring the sustained reopening of the crossing points on the basis of existing agreements, including the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access between the Palestinian Authority and Israel,

Stressing, in this regard, the importance of the effective exercise by the Palestinian Authority of its full government responsibilities in the Gaza Strip in all fields, including through its presence at the Gaza crossing points,

Noting the active participation of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority in the activities of the Special Envoys of the Quartet,

Reaffirming the necessity of achieving a comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict in all its aspects, on the basis of relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) of 22 November 1967, [338 \(1973\)](#) of 22 October 1973, [1397 \(2002\)](#) of 12 March 2002, [1515 \(2003\)](#) of 19 November 2003, [1850 \(2008\)](#) of 16 December 2008 and [1860 \(2009\)](#), as well as the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference and the principle of land for peace, in order to ensure a political solution, with two States – Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign and viable Palestinian State – living side by side in peace and security and mutual recognition,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General,⁷¹

Expressing grave concern about continuing violence against civilians,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;

⁷¹ [A/78/86-E/2023/83](#).

2. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Secretary-General for his rapid response and ongoing efforts regarding assistance to the Palestinian people, including with regard to the emergency humanitarian needs in the Gaza Strip;

3. *Also expresses its appreciation* to the Member States, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental, regional and non-governmental organizations that have provided and continue to provide assistance to the Palestinian people;

4. *Stresses* the importance of the work of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority and of the steps taken under the auspices of the Secretary-General to ensure the achievement of a coordinated mechanism for United Nations activities throughout the occupied territories;

5. *Urges* Member States, international financial institutions of the United Nations system, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and regional and interregional organizations to extend, as rapidly and as generously as possible, economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, in close cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organization and through official Palestinian institutions;

6. *Welcomes* the meetings of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians of 25 September 2013, 22 September 2014, 27 May and 30 September 2015, 19 September 2016 and 18 September 2017, 27 September 2018, 26 September 2019, 2 June 2020, 23 February 2021, 17 November 2021, 10 May and 22 September 2022, and 3 and 4 May and 20 September 2023 and the outcome of the Cairo International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza, held on 12 October 2014, and the generous donor response to support the needs of the Palestinian people, and urges the rapid disbursement of donor pledges;

7. *Stresses* the importance of following up on the results of the Cairo International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza to effectively promote economic recovery and reconstruction in a timely and sustainable manner;

8. *Calls upon* donors that have not yet converted their budget support pledges into disbursements to transfer funds as soon as possible, encourages all donors to increase their direct assistance to the Palestinian Authority in accordance with its government programme in order to enable it to build a viable and prosperous Palestinian State, underlines the need for equitable burden-sharing by donors in this effort, and encourages donors to consider aligning funding cycles with the Palestinian Authority's national budget cycle;

9. *Calls upon* relevant organizations and agencies of the United Nations system to intensify their assistance in response to the urgent needs of the Palestinian people in accordance with priorities set forth by the Palestinian side;

10. *Expresses its appreciation* for the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and recognizes the vital role of the Agency in providing humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, particularly in the Gaza Strip;

11. *Calls upon* the international community to provide urgently needed assistance and services in an effort to alleviate the difficult humanitarian situation being faced by Palestinian women, children and their families and to help in the reconstruction and development of relevant Palestinian institutions;

12. *Stresses* the role that all funding instruments, including the European Commission's Palestinian-European Mechanism for the Management of Socioeconomic Aid and the World Bank trust fund, have been playing in directly assisting the Palestinian people;

13. *Urges* Member States to open their markets to exports of Palestinian products on the most favourable terms, consistent with appropriate trading rules, and to implement fully existing trade and cooperation agreements;

14. *Calls upon* the international donor community to expedite the delivery of pledged assistance to the Palestinian people to meet their urgent needs;

15. *Stresses*, in this context, the importance of ensuring free humanitarian access to the Palestinian people and the free movement of persons and goods;

16. *Also stresses* the need for the full implementation by both parties of existing agreements, including the Agreement on Movement and Access and the Agreed Principles for the Rafah Crossing, of 15 November 2005, to allow for the freedom of movement of the Palestinian civilian population, as well as for imports and exports, within and into and out of the Gaza Strip;

17. *Further stresses* the need to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, premises, facilities, equipment, vehicles and supplies, as well as the need to ensure safe and unhindered access by humanitarian personnel and delivery of supplies and equipment, in order to allow such personnel to efficiently perform their task of assisting affected civilian populations;

18. *Urges* the international donor community, United Nations agencies and organizations and non-governmental organizations to extend to the Palestinian people, as rapidly as possible, emergency economic assistance and humanitarian assistance, particularly in the Gaza Strip, to counter the impact of the current crisis;

19. *Stresses* the need for the continued implementation of the Paris Protocol on Economic Relations of 29 April 1994, fifth annex to the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, signed in Washington, D.C., on 28 September 1995,⁷² including with regard to the full, prompt and regular transfer of Palestinian indirect tax revenues;

20. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session, through the Economic and Social Council, on the implementation of the present resolution, containing:

(a) An assessment of the assistance actually received by the Palestinian people;

(b) An assessment of the needs still unmet and specific proposals for responding effectively to them;

21. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-ninth session, under the item entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", the sub-item entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people".

*47th plenary meeting
8 December 2023*

⁷² A/51/889-S/1997/357, annex.

X. Arab and OIC Groups request the resumption of the 10th Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly

On 8 December, the Permanent Representatives of Egypt and Mauritania to the United Nations in their respective capacities as Chair of the Arab Group and Chair of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Group addressed this [letter](#) to the President of the General Assembly.

The Arab Republic of Egypt and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, in our respective capacities as Chair of the Arab Group and Chair of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Group at the United Nations in New York, and pursuant to the decisions made by the extraordinary Islamic-Arab Summit, convened on 11 November 2023 in Riyadh, and with reference to the letter dated 6 December 2023 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council invoking Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations, make the present request for the resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly following the veto cast on 8 December 2023 by a permanent member of the Security Council on a draft resolution concerning the grave situation of the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip and demanding an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.

In the absence of a ceasefire and in light of the ongoing grave breaches of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and violations of the relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution [ES-10/21](#), the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly in the Gaza Strip, has continued to dramatically deteriorate. As Israel, the occupying Power, persists in its military aggression and siege against the Palestinian civilian population, killing and wounding thousands more Palestinian children, women and men, causing more wanton destruction of homes and civilian infrastructure, forcibly displacing more than 1.9 million people, undermining the access and ability of humanitarian agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), to deliver on their mandates, and impeding desperately-needed humanitarian assistance, it is endangering more civilian lives, risking further deterioration of this already-catastrophic situation, and threatening regional and international peace and security, making it urgent that the General Assembly convene to address this crisis, in accordance with resolution [377\(V\)](#) of 1950, entitled “Uniting for peace”, as rapidly as possible.

(Signed) Osama Mahmoud Abdelkhalek **Mahmoud**
Chair of the Arab Group
Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt
to the United Nations

(Signed) Sidi **Mohamed Laghdaf**
Chair of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Group
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania
to the United Nations

XI. WHO’s Executive Board adopts resolution on access for life-saving aid into Gaza and respect for laws of war

On 10 December, the World Health Organization’s Executive Board in a special session on the health situation in the occupied Palestinian territory adopted the following [resolution](#):

Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem

The Executive Board,

Noting the role of WHO within its mandate as the directing and coordinating authority on international health matters;

Expressing grave concern at the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, and its vast consequences for the civilian population, and in light of the gravity of the current escalating situation, and the magnitude of the intense damage on the public health sector, that has, to this date, killed and injured thousands of civilians, the majority of them children, women and elderly, including humanitarian and health workers, in addition to thousands of victims who remain under the rubble;

Emphasizing that all civilians, including health and humanitarian aid workers, must be protected, in accordance with international humanitarian law, and deploring in this regard the heavy civilian casualties and widespread destruction;

Expressing further concern at the large-scale destruction of health facilities including hospitals and ambulances, and at the catastrophic humanitarian conditions that have been inflicted on the public health system in the Gaza Strip;

Recognizing that attacks on medical and health personnel result in long-lasting impacts, including the loss of life and human suffering, weaken the ability of health systems to deliver essential life-saving services and produce setbacks for health development;

Expressing also deep concern at the killing of more than one hundred UN staff including WHO staff;

Commending WHO, its Director-General and its staff and health cluster partners in the field for remaining and delivering, and for their tireless efforts to address the situation on the ground in the Gaza Strip, early on, despite severe dangers to their lives, and expressing appreciation to all humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners that are delivering life-saving aid to alleviate the impact of the conflict on civilians;

Bearing in mind the appeal for a humanitarian ceasefire by invoking Article 99 of the United Nations Charter; [U.N. Secretary-General, Letter dated Dec. 6, 2023 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, U.N. Doc. S/2023/962 (Dec. 6, 2023)];

Recalling the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols, as applicable, as well as relevant customary international law concerned with the protection of the wounded and sick, medical personnel and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their means of transport and equipment, as well as hospitals and other medical facilities, and the obligation of all parties to armed conflict to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law in all circumstances [SC Res 2286, WHA 65.20];

Recalling further the specific obligations under international humanitarian law to respect and protect, in situations of armed conflict, medical personnel and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their means of transport and equipment, and hospitals and other medical facilities, which must not be attacked, and to ensure that the wounded and sick receive, to the fullest extent practicable and with the least possible delay, the medical care and attention required [SC Res 2286];

Expressing concern at the inadequate humanitarian access to, and its grave impact on, the Palestinian civilian population, and underlining the urgent need for necessary humanitarian measures, including

humanitarian pauses, to ensure full, rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access throughout the Gaza Strip;

Expressing concern also at the dire situation of hospitals and other medical facilities and ambulances, and the obstruction of the provision of the fuel necessary for their operation, endangering the lives of the sick and wounded, and preventing the conduct of medical operations and procedures, and the operation of medical equipment including incubators for premature newborn babies and surgical and resuscitation equipment for persons suffering from severe medical conditions;

Expressing further concern at the fact that the civilian population has been exposed to conflict and insecurity, leading to significant mental health and psychosocial needs, underlining the importance of urgently providing mental health and psychosocial support, as well as trauma-related services, to the affected persons particularly children;

Underlining the disproportionate effect on children, women, elderly, disabled persons and the chronically ill, and recognizing the need to address their specific health needs, including the special health needs of persons with disabilities, bearing in mind the challenges they face in accessing medical services, which are compounded in the current situation, as a result of the destruction of civilian infrastructure and residential buildings, and the resulting additional restrictions to human mobility;

Expressing concern at the public health management implications of the existence of thousands of corpses of victims in the Gaza Strip buried under the rubble, which are exacerbated by the lack of access to water, electricity, and equipment needed to bury the bodies of the dead; Expressing further concern that intense overcrowding in shelters coupled with disrupted health, water and sanitation systems and lack of fuel pose increasing risks of the spread of infectious diseases, including waterborne, airborne, vector and vaccine-preventable diseases;

Recognizing the interconnectedness between health and other sectors, such as water and sanitation and nutrition, and the need for a comprehensive approach to humanitarian assistance, and stressing that ongoing challenges in the Gaza Strip, including restrictions on the movement of goods can impact food availability contributing to malnutrition, while the limited availability of clean water, increases the risk of outbreaks and epidemics, and stressing that access to clean water and sanitation facilities is crucial for maintaining public health,

1. CALLS FOR the immediate, sustained and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief, including the access of medical personnel, the entry of humanitarian equipment, transport and supplies in the occupied Palestinian territory, in particular the Gaza Strip, and the granting of exit permits for patients in need of medical treatment outside the Gaza Strip, and stresses the need for the unhindered and safe passage of ambulances at checkpoints, especially in times of conflict [based on A/HRC/Res/52/3];

2. CALLS UPON all parties to fulfil their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law to ensure, to the fullest extent of the means available to it, the supply and replenishment of medicine and medical equipment to the civilian population, and reaffirms that all parties to armed conflict must comply fully with the obligations applicable to them under international humanitarian law related to the protection of civilians in armed conflict and medical personnel [GC IV, article 55; SC Res 2286];

3. DEMANDS that all parties fully comply with their obligations, in particular their obligations under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the obligations applicable to them under the Additional Protocols, to ensure the respect and protection 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 [based on OP 2, SC Res 2286];

4. DEMANDS further a sustained, orderly, unimpeded, safe and unobstructed passage for medical personnel and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their equipment, transport and supplies, including surgical items, to all people in need, consistent with international humanitarian law [SC Res 2286], calls for the passage for ambulances and medical evacuations of critically injured and sick patients as well as respect and protection of the wounded, sick and injured, and ensuring the safety, security and safe movement of all Palestinian patients to receive medical needs and treatments, and calls for the human treatment of all persons deprived of their liberty and their access to medical treatment in compliance with international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols;

5. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(a) to report, based on field monitoring and assessment conducted by the WHO emergency teams, on the public health implications of the catastrophic humanitarian crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, including with respect to acts of violence against the wounded and sick, medical personnel and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their means of transport and equipment, as well as hospitals and other medical facilities, and submit recommendations in this regard to the 154th session of the Executive Board and to the fourth meeting of the Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response, and to the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly;

(b) to coordinate with donors, prior to the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly, to secure the funding for the immediate health needs as well as the rehabilitation and rebuilding of the health system in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and calls on Member States, donors and international humanitarian and development actors to provide humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, and to ensure the allocation of human and financial resources in order to urgently achieve these objectives;

(c) to assess, in full cooperation with relevant UN agencies, the extent and nature of psychiatric morbidity, and other forms of mental health and psychosocial support needs and challenges of all affected persons;

(d) to strengthen and to continue providing the necessary technical and material health assistance in order to meet the health needs of the Palestinian people, especially the most vulnerable;

(e) to continue strengthening partnerships with other UN agencies such as UNRWA and relevant partners in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, to enhance humanitarian health response capacities by delivering emergency aid and protection in an inclusive and sustained manner before, during and after the military operations and the humanitarian crisis;

6. CALLS upon the international community to secure appropriate funding to support the immediate and future needs of the WHO health programmes in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and for rebuilding the Palestinian health system, in full cooperation with WHO and relevant UN agencies such as UNRWA and partners.

XII. UN Palestinian Rights Committee holds a panel discussion “2023 War on Gaza: The Responsibility to Prevent Genocide”

On 12 December, a [Panel discussion](#) “2023 War on Gaza: The Responsibility to Prevent Genocide” was convened by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP). The [Chair summary](#) of the event is replicated below.

The Panel discussion “2023 War on Gaza: The Responsibility to Prevent Genocide” was convened on 12 December 2023 by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP). The event consisted of an opening with remarks by **H.E. Mr. Arrmanatha Christiawan Nasir**, Vice Chair of the Committee and Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, and **H.E. Ms. Feda Abdelhady Nasser**, Deputy Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations. The panel was comprised of **Mr. Jehad Abusalim**, Executive Director of The Jerusalem Fund; **Mr. Raz Segal**, Associate Professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies and Endowed Professor in the Study of Modern Genocide, Stockton University; **Ms. Hannah Bruinsma**, Legal Advisor at the NGO Law for Palestine; and **Ms. Katherine Gallagher**, Senior Staff Attorney at the New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights. The event was broadcast live on UN WebTV.

In his opening, the **Vice Chair** stated that the Committee had convened the panel at a time when the Palestinian people’s very existence was under threat. The death toll among Palestinian civilians—mostly women and children—caused by Israel’s war on Gaza was akin to collective punishment. Furthermore, the forcible displacement of Gaza’s population, many of whom were already refugees, and the systematic destruction of homes, infrastructure, mosques, churches, hospitals, public buildings, and protected objects, was endangering the very presence of Palestinians in their ancestral land. Such violence raised questions about the objectives of Israel’s military operation and the international community’s responsibility to address ongoing crimes. The international community recently commemorated the 75th anniversary of the “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide” of 9 December 1948, ratified or acceded by 153 States, as of 2022. It was the obligation and duty of Member States to prevent this crime and implement the “never again” call.

Ambassador Feda Abdelhady said that the State of Palestine had acceded to the Genocide Convention, alongside other human rights covenants, but had not foreseen being compelled to invoke it, believing that the international community’s vow of “never again” was universal and that the legal and moral obligations towards the question of Palestine would be upheld, enabling the Palestinian people to realize their long-denied rights. The world was witnessing unspeakable atrocities and crimes in Occupied Palestine, especially in the besieged Gaza Strip, being perpetrated by Israel and its occupying forces, including settler militias, as a blatant extension of over 75 years of Nakba.

This situation had led scholars, jurists, civil society, parliamentarians, governments, and global citizenry to conclude that Israel was committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide against the Palestinian people. Ambassador Abdelhady said that the aims were the erasure of the Palestinian presence, its national identity, and the entrenchment of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian land with as few Palestinians as possible. The State of Palestine appealed to Member States and all organs of the UN system to take action, with the most urgent step being a ceasefire. She expressed the hope that the panel would help raise awareness, provide information about the law, and suggest avenues for action.

Panel Discussion

Mr. Jehad Abusalim, born and raised in Gaza, stated that his family and friends were among the over two million Palestinians enduring one of the most violent military assaults this century. As of 11 December,

the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor estimated that 24,142 Palestinians in Gaza had been killed by Israeli bombardment, including 9,420 children. Additionally, 48,901 had been injured, and 1,840,000 had been displaced. A total of 53,000 homes and over 1,300 industrial facilities had been destroyed. What he described as the “ongoing genocide in Gaza” was part of Israel’s violent settler-colonialism and occupation of Palestinian land which began with the 1948 Nakba (“the catastrophe”), leading more than 750,000 Palestinians to flee or be expelled from their homes. The Nakba, he stressed, was not just an event in the distant past: its ongoing political, economic, geographic, and cultural effects prevented Palestinians from realizing their potential in their own homeland.

In 1956, 1957, and in 1967, Israel occupied the Gaza Strip, forcing a process of “de-development” and separating it from the West Bank through military closures and a permit system that limited entry and exit from the Strip and splitting families. In 2007, Israel imposed a land, air, and sea blockade. When Gaza rebelled, Israel always responded with extreme violence, further colonization, incursions, mass bombardment, and the killing of civilians. Residents of Gaza used the expression “I’m suffocating” to describe a psychological and emotional state when every simple and basic daily act, like accessing clean water, travel for medical treatment or education, fishing, and harvesting crops, were exhausting ordeals. Gazans continued to be killed in droves because Israel used extreme violence to reassert control.

Mr. Raz Segal pointed out that on 9 December 2023, a group of 56 senior scholars of the Holocaust, genocide, and mass violence, including himself, signed a statement deploring the atrocity crimes against civilians committed by Hamas and the Islamic Jihad on 7 October, and by Israeli forces since then. They noted evidence of a “widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack” that the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) defines as a crime against humanity. Since 7 October, Israeli leaders, including Israeli President Isaac Herzog, ministers in the war cabinet, and senior army officers - all with command authority – had made dozens of statements demonstrating an “intent to destroy Palestinians “as such”. Israel’s officials used a tried colonial rationalization for the destruction of people under colonial occupation by describing them as “human animals”.

According to Mr. Segal, casting entire civilian populations as “savages” or “enemies” - and as legitimate military targets - was a common genocidal mechanism. As examples, he cited the 1904-1907 operation in Southwest Africa when the German colonizers killed 65,000 Herero and Nama - 80 percent of the population. A similar rhetoric was utilized by Hutu authorities in Rwanda in 1990 leading to the 1994 genocide.

For Mr. Segal, Israel had demonstrated genocidal intent according to the three acts defining genocide in the Convention: (a) “killing members of the group”; (b) “causing serious bodily or mental harm”; and (c) “deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part”. The “total siege” measures, together with the forced displacement of over 1.8 million of the 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza, and the risk of outbreaks of infectious diseases, exacerbated by acute shortages of food, clean water, fuel, and medical supplies, met the conditions defined in the Convention. While forced displacement - or “ethnic cleansing”- was not in itself an act of genocide, it had historically figured in genocidal processes of pushing unwanted people into designated areas - that eventually escalated into genocide. The Nazis experimented from 1939 to 1942 with various schemes of forced displacement of Jews before reaching the “final solution of the Jewish question.” Mr. Segal added that Israel’s statements about deporting Palestinians in Gaza to the Sinai desert were also alarming as deserts have been used historically as weapons of genocide, leaving entire populations to die from hunger and dehydration.

Mr. Segal also noted that since 7 October, there was incitement to genocide, a separate crime under article 3 of the Genocide Convention, in Israeli media, social media, politics, and public spaces. The Israeli discourse promoted the notion that “there are no innocent civilians in Gaza”, “Palestinian children are terrorists,” and the Israeli army needs to “burn Gaza until nothing was left of it”. Such statements openly confirmed the “intent” - usually the most difficult element to prove.

Ms. Hannah Bruinsma expressed concern that intellectuals and activists, particularly Palestinian colleagues speaking out or calling for legal actions against Israel’s crimes, were facing threats, not just in Palestine, but also in the United States. She mentioned the failure of the international community to hold Israel accountable for the 75 year-long settler colonial regime, 56-year illegal occupation of Palestinian territory, and 17-year-long siege of the Gaza Strip. Israel’s decades-long impunity for international crimes, including the crime of apartheid, had continued with war crimes, crimes against humanity, and incitement to commit genocide in Gaza. Genocide was taking place in Gaza while the United States used its UN Security Council veto to stop calls for a ceasefire.

Ms. Bruinsma stated the situation in Gaza met the legal and criminological definitions of genocide, requiring both intent to destroy and actions. As other panellists, Ms. Bruinsma judged that Israel had committed *actus reus* in Gaza, actions that constituted genocide as defined by the Convention. Usually, “intent” was the most difficult part to prove, but in this case, Israeli leaders had been so publicly explicit, that their statements clearly constituted the *mens rea* - the mental element - of genocide. Since 7 October, Law for Palestine created a database, so far containing over 500 statements of genocidal statements by Israeli public officials that would be submitted to the ICC.

Ms. Bruinsma cited Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term “genocide”, noting that he had written that genocide was not limited to acts of mass killing, but must encompass a coordinated plan aimed at destroying the essential foundations of the lives of national or ethnic groups. In Gaza, Israel’s implementation of the 17-year-old “Dahiya doctrine”, a military strategy of using disproportionate force to weaken the population to the point where mere survival supersedes resistance, was in full display. The Genocide Convention, signed by 152 States so far, obliges all States to comply with its terms, as reiterated by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on several occasions. The prohibition of genocide constituted a *jus cogens* norm, meaning that it was absolute and could not be deviated from under any justification or circumstance. In closing, Ms. Bruinsma expressed solidarity with her colleagues in the Occupied Palestinian Territory who demanded robust action against these crimes, often at personal risk. It was incumbent on all members of the international community to build a case against the perpetrators of this genocide and see that they were brought to justice.

Ms. Katherine Gallagher focused on the characterization of the crimes being committed in the Gaza Strip, the implications for the International Criminal Court and States parties. She reiterated that intent and genocidal acts were currently taking place in Gaza in addition to crimes against humanity, i.e.: murder, persecution, forcible transfer, and extermination.

Article 1 of the Convention created a legal duty to prevent genocide: “The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish”. The ICJ found in the case of *Bosnia v Serbia*, “that each State party must assess whether a genocide or a serious risk of genocide exists”. This was the international community’s collective commitment to ensure that groups were not targeted for destruction because of their identity. All states had a “duty to prevent”: (a) from the moment a country “learns of or should have learned of the existence of a serious risk of genocide” (b) to take all measures “reasonably available to them” to deter the commission of the crime; and (c) such duty was heightened when a State had the ability to influence or “effect on those suspected of preparing genocide, or reasonably suspected of harbouring

specific intent”. The ICJ could also issue provisional measures to ensure compliance with the Convention in the case of an unfolding genocide, including if it found that breaches of the Convention were “plausible” (e.g. *Gambia v Myanmar re: Rohingya genocide*).

Ms. Gallagher informed that the Center for Constitutional Rights, on 13 November, had filed an urgent motion on behalf of Defence for Children International-Palestine, Al-Haq, and individuals in Gaza asking a US federal court to immediately stop President Biden, Secretary of State Blinken, and Secretary of Defence Austin from providing further arms, money, military support, and diplomatic support to Israel on grounds that they have a legal duty to prevent, and not contribute to “an unfolding genocide against Palestinians in Gaza”. The lawsuit claimed that by providing military assistance to Israel, the US had crossed the line to “complicity in genocide”. Other experts had concluded that the United States had breached its obligation to prevent genocide. Ms. Gallagher strongly urged Member States to act and prevent the “unfolding genocide in Gaza”.

H.E. Mr. Hari Prabowo, Deputy Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, who moderated the **Q&A session**, invited Member States “to assume their responsibilities to prevent genocide and to “vote for humanity” at the resumed General Assembly 10th emergency special session taking place that afternoon. He asked clarification on accountability mechanisms available to Member States, including at the ICC and ICJ.

Panellists responded that taking “precautionary measures” at the ICJ was a tool available. Halting the transfer of weapons to Israel and Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) measures were also powerful measures. Ending decades-long of impunity vis-à-vis the State of Israel and preventing a possible escalation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, where weapons are being distributed to settlers, were necessary. Other suggested actions included an arms embargo against Israel, as called for by the General Assembly 40 years ago; implementation of article 6 of the Arms Trade Treaty prohibiting arms transfers in cases of genocide; and applying diplomatic and visa restrictions to Israelis. Responding to a question on the role of national courts, it was reiterated that the crime of genocide is an *erga omnes* norm, so all States can file cases in national courts because of the Convention’s universal jurisdiction. A strong call was made to States to act and not leave the burden to civil society organizations.

Responding to a question on Israel’s stated goal of “wiping out Hamas” and the possible duration of the conflict, panellists responded that there was no convincing evidence that Hamas could be defeated without further devastation and huge civilian casualties. It was also suggested to stop referring to a “conflict” but rather to “State violence” inflicted on Palestinians beginning with the 1948 Nakba. A just and lasting solution would have to be based on equality, dignity, and agreement that “security for Israel depends on security for Palestinians and vice versa”. Panellists concluded by reiterating the sense of urgency to “stop the killing and the ongoing genocide” while ensuring Israel’s accountability and an end of the occupation.

In closing, **Ambassador Prabowo** expressed the Committee’s support to the Secretary-General for invoking article 99 of the UN Charter, asking the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities and ensure the implementation of its resolution 2712 (2023) while regretting the failure of the Security Council, on 8 December, to adopt a resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. The onus was now with the General Assembly. He made a final appeal to all Members and Observers of the Committee to take usual action and stand up for Palestine.

XIII. General Assembly 10th Emergency Special Session adopts resolution demanding an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza

On 12 December, the General Assembly adopted the resolution titled “Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations” ([A/RES/ES-10/22](#)) by a recorded vote of 153 in favour to 10 against, with 23 abstentions, during a resumption of its Tenth Emergency Special Session on Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The text and voting results are replicated below.

ES-10/22. 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 resolutions regarding the question of Palestine,

Recalling also all relevant Security Council resolutions,

Taking note of the letter dated 6 December 2023 from the Secretary-General, under Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations, addressed to the President of the Security Council,⁷³

Taking note also of the letter dated 7 December 2023 from the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East addressed to the President of the General Assembly,

Expressing grave concern over the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and the suffering of the Palestinian civilian population, and emphasizing that the Palestinian and Israeli civilian populations must be protected in accordance with international humanitarian law,

- 1. Demands an immediate humanitarian ceasefire;*
- 2. Reiterates its demand that all parties comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, notably with regard to the protection of civilians;*
- 3. Demands the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, as well as ensuring humanitarian access;*
- 4. 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.*

*45th plenary meeting
12 December 2023*

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia

⁷³ [S/2023/962](#).

(Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Austria, Czechia, Guatemala, Israel, Liberia, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, United States of America.

Abstentions: Argentina, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Malawi, Marshall Islands, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Palau, Panama, Romania, Slovakia, South Sudan, Togo, Tonga, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay.

XIV. UNRWA Commissioner-General addresses the Global Refugee Forum

On 13 December, UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini delivered the following [statement](#) at the Global Refugee Forum, excerpted below.

...

I have, Excellencies, three calls today.

First, we need an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza and an end to the siege to let in sufficient aid. I welcome here the overwhelming support of 153 UN Member States at the General Assembly calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.

Second, we must be able to roll out humanitarian assistance worthy of its name. It needs to be meaningful. The day after the war in Gaza will be shaped by how we respond to the current crisis. What can 100 trucks or so per day offer to 2.2 million people? The high-level discussions about the number of trucks per day have taken up so much time and energy that I have no answer to a father of five in Rafah who asked me how he and his children can survive on one can of beans for three days. We are very far from an adequate humanitarian response.

Third, collectively, we must ensure that International Humanitarian Law is still the regulating framework of the conflict. It cannot be selective or be re-interpreted [sic].

To conclude, the Israel-Palestine conflict has been neglected for far too long. The political process needs to be revived urgently. There is absolutely no alternative to a genuine political process to end the cycle of violence. Israelis and Palestinians must both enjoy statehood, peace, and stability. This will require dedicated efforts to help both societies heal and live side by side.

XV. UN human rights independent experts call for permanent ceasefire to protect rights and futures of women and girls in OPT and Israel

On 14 December, Dorothy Estrada Tanck (Chair), Claudia Flores, Ivana Krstić, Haina Lu, and Laura Nyirinkindi, members of the Working group on discrimination against women and girls; Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967; Reem Alsalem, Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences; Cecilia Bailliet, Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity; Siobhán Mullally, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing; Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Carlos Salazar Couto (Chair-Rapporteur), Sorch MacLeod, Jovana Jezdimirovic Ranito, Chris M. A. Kwaja, and Ravindran Daniel, Working Group on the use of mercenaries; Alexandra Xanthaki, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation; Paula Gaviria Betancur, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons; Claudia Mahler, Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons; Margaret Satterthwaite, Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers; Heba Hagrass, Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, Ana Baldé (Chair-Rapporteur), Gabriella Citroni (Vice-Chair), Angkhana Neelapaijit, Grażyna Baranowska, Ana Lorena Delgadillo Pérez, members of the Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances; Priya Gopalan (Chair-Rapporteur), Matthew Gillett (Vice-Chair on Communications), Miriam Estrada-Castillo, and Mumba Malila, Working Group on arbitrary detention; and Farida Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on the right to education issued the following [statement](#).

Amidst relentless war, deprivations, and displacement, women and girls in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel face exacerbated violence, inequalities, and discrimination. We call for a permanent ceasefire, cessation of forced displacement and immediate adequate humanitarian intervention to protect the human rights and futures of women and girls. We are profoundly concerned with the situation of women and girls in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel. The tragic consequences of this conflict will be disproportionately borne by women and girls for generations.

Since 7 October 2023, Israel's intense bombardment on Gaza has reportedly killed nearly 12,000 women and children. 2,784 women have become widows and new heads of households. In total, 1.1 million women and girls are in dire need of humanitarian assistance, including food, shelter, water, and sanitation. Israel's bombing of water and sanitation facilities and interference with power supplies have nearly destroyed access to these critical services. These numbers will only increase unless a permanent ceasefire is instituted and immediate access granted to all humanitarian actors to provide adequate support, including healthcare.

We reiterate our concern about the impact of the conflict on the health of women and girls and we are particularly alarmed at pregnant women's ongoing struggle to access medical care for themselves and their babies, in violation of the heightened protection they are granted under international humanitarian law. Pregnant women, along with young children, older persons and persons with disabilities, are at higher risk of communicable diseases, malnutrition, and death, all of which become increasingly likely as Gaza's civilian infrastructure collapses.

Women and girls in particular conditions of vulnerability, such as older women and women and girls with disabilities, are living in unimaginable circumstances. Older women are facing hardships due to chronic illnesses, reliance on care and limited mobility caused by aging. The impact on women and girls

with disabilities has been devastating, as there has been a total breakdown of already limited care and support systems, accessible physical and informational infrastructure and access to assistive devices, medicines, and other needs. Any prospect they had of living independently and being heard has been shattered.

We are concerned that the crisis has reinforced traditional gender roles and stereotypes in the household that negatively impact the rights of women and girls. Girls now spend more time caring for their families, and women of all ages continue to disproportionately bear the burden of unpaid care work. These burdens may also further impact the mental health of women of all ages and girls, significantly adding to their long-term emotional and psychological trauma.

The harms weigh particularly heavily on young girls. We are especially concerned about both the short- and long-term prospects for girls in Gaza. The disruption of schooling, collapse of the healthcare system, massive destruction of housing, overcrowded shelters, and the general breakdown of physical and social structures and the rule of law, will impact the well-being and future prospects of girls in all aspects of their lives, especially those orphaned or separated/displaced due to the conflict. The harmful effects of the current crisis – including risks of early/forced marriage, neglect, and violence – will have a profound bearing on future generations of women and girls. Palestinian girls are seeing their future – already fragile after 56 years of Israeli military occupation – destroyed in front of their eyes.

Further prolonged displacement or forcible transfer of Palestinians would gravely exacerbate these many harms. Israel's bombardment has reportedly displaced 951,490 women and girls from their homes. These women and girls are increasingly facing malnutrition and family separation and are at risk of sexual violence and trafficking.

Displacement has been shown to have long-term negative impacts on education, income, pensions, family care and support and mental and physical health. To mitigate these impacts, the UN's Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement state that all international actors must prevent and avoid conditions that lead to internal displacement, with extra protection and consideration for older women, women with disabilities, mothers and children. Israel has a clear legal responsibility to ensure that its use of force does not lead to mass displacement of civilians. We call on the State of Israel to fulfill these basic obligations.

We also remain concerned about women and girls in the West Bank, including east Jerusalem, who have faced heightened discrimination, harassment, sexual assault, and attacks by Israeli authorities and settlers since 7 October. Women and girls continue to face draconian restrictions on family unification and freedom of movement. Moreover, they are at the constant risk of settler violence and arbitrary arrest and detention by Israeli occupation forces, which has kept them confined to their homes and deprived of their livelihoods. We urge Israel, as the occupying power, to fulfill its duty to prevent and protect women and girls, including women human rights defenders, from arbitrary detention, discrimination and violence and to ensure access to justice and accountability for those responsible.

We also hold great concern over the hostage-taking of Israeli women and girls by Hamas, in some circumstances amounting to acts tantamount to enforced disappearance. We call on Hamas and other armed groups to ensure the immediate, unconditional, safe and secure release of all hostages.

Women and girls often experience distinct, devastating forms of violence during conflict, rooted in gender discrimination and inequality, including sexual violence, deployed systematically as a weapon of war. We are alarmed at increasing reports of sexual violence perpetrated by Hamas and other armed groups against women in Israel on 7 October 2023, as well as sexual assault and threats of sexual violence against

women in the occupied Palestinian territory since then. These reports must be investigated, and those responsible must be held accountable by an independent process.

We wish to unequivocally remind the international community, however, that no international crime justifies the perpetration of another. We urge Israel to immediately cease its bombardment of Gaza and its mass displacement of Palestinians. Impartial processes to ensure justice, support and full reparations to all victims and accountability for the crimes perpetrated should be guaranteed.

We echo calls for a permanent ceasefire and emphasise the glaring absence of women's voices in the negotiations. The meaningful inclusion of women in the conflict resolution and recovery process is non-negotiable, in accordance with obligations to ensure non-discrimination and Security Council Resolution 1325.

We wish to remind all parties to the conflict and all States and other actors that international human rights law applies even in times of conflict and occupation and that the destruction caused by war is multi-generational. All parties must urgently use all means at their disposal to end the gross violations of women's and girls' rights in the occupied Palestinian territory, as the failure to do so will have a devastating lasting impact.

XVI. OHCHR alarmed by killings of journalists and their family members in Gaza

On 14 December, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory issued the following [press release](#).

The UN Human Rights Office in Occupied Palestinian Territory is alarmed by an unprecedented rate of journalists and media workers who have been killed in Gaza since 7 October.

OHCHR has verified the killing of 50 journalists and media workers, and has received information that 30 more may have died, amounting to approximately 6 per cent of all those registered with the Journalists' Syndicate in Gaza. According to the International Federation of Journalists, 73 per cent of the total number of journalists and media workers killed globally so far in 2023 have been in Gaza.

Gaza has seemingly become the deadliest place for journalists – and their families – in the world.

Journalists and media workers, utilising a variety of tools, including social media, have kept the world informed in real-time of the horrors that civilians in Gaza are enduring. Their dedication deserves tribute. But one by one, these eyes on the ground are going dark.

Mr. Mustafa Ayyash, the founder and Director of the Gaza Now News Agency, was killed along with at least eight members of his family, including children, in an apparent airstrike on his house in Al Nuseirat Camp on 22 November. He had covered escalations of hostilities in Gaza since 2014. Ayyash's last post on his X social media account was just prior to his own death, in which he reported that an Israeli Security Forces' (ISF) strike in Al Nuseirat Camp had claimed the lives of his own father, mother, sister, two brothers and other extended family members.

On 9 December, an apparent airstrike on the home of Ms. Ola Attallah, a prominent journalist, in Al Daraj area in eastern Gaza City, killed her along with nine members of her family. Ms. Attallah had worked for different local and international media outlets, including Al Anadolu news agency.

Since 7 October, she had been very active reporting on the desperate plight and suffering of civilians in Gaza and the terrible toll that this conflict has taken on them.

Also, on 9 December, Mr. Mohammad Abu Samra, a photojournalist specialised in covering sporting events, was reportedly killed by a sniper.

On 24 October, Al Jazeera viewers witnessed correspondent Mr. Wael Dahdouh receive news on air of the killing of his wife, son, daughter and grandson. On 8 December, a strike on the home of Mr Abdalhamid Abdelati, a journalist and the Head of Al Sawt Al Sha'b Radio station, reportedly killed seven members of his family, including his mother, sister, and brother. Mr. Abdelati was not at home at the time of the strike.

International humanitarian law requires that the parties to an armed conflict take all necessary measures to minimise the impact of military operations on civilians, which includes journalists and media workers. In war zones, journalists and media workers perform a particularly vital function by informing the public about what is happening, and by so doing they highlight the impact of violence on civilians and their humanitarian and other protection needs, promote compliance with the applicable rules of international law, and support accountability by documenting violations. Every effort must be made to ensure that journalists and media workers are respected and protected.

An alleged Israeli strike destroyed a house in the vicinity of Jabalia Camp on 6 November, killing 22 members of the same extended family of Mr. Momen Al Sharafi, including his parents, siblings and their children. This is one of four incidents since 7 October in which Israeli Forces allegedly struck the locations of reporters working for Al Jazeera and their family members.

Of grave concern are the widely reported claims that journalists and media workers have received intimidatory and threatening phone calls from Israeli security personnel. Threats reportedly preceded the killing of Mr. Rifa'at Al A'reer, a well-known poet, professor and online commentator, who was killed along with six members of his extended family, including his siblings and their children, in an apparent Israeli airstrike in Gaza City on 7 December. Mr. Al A'reer was the founder of the "We Are Not Numbers" project in Gaza, and a prolific writer on the Palestinian cause. The last threat he received shortly before his death prompted him to leave his family at a shelter and relocate to his sister's apartment, where he and his relatives were killed.

These and other similar reports must be fully and transparently investigated, along with the conduct of the military operations that led to the deaths of these journalists, media workers and their family members.

The killing of journalists, their forced displacement from the north, and severe movement restrictions have greatly hindered efforts to monitor, document, and report on the situation in Gaza and on violations and abuses of international law. Information is already scarce due to power and internet connectivity blackouts resulting from ISF strikes on key infrastructures as well as the acute fuel shortage caused by extreme restrictions on fuel imports into Gaza imposed by Israeli authorities.

Israel and Egypt have not permitted journalists to rotate in or out of the Gaza Strip and only a handful of international journalists embedded with the ISF have been able to briefly enter, reporting only what the ISF allows them.

Despite these obstacles, a dwindling number of local reporters and media workers, who themselves must endure personal loss and the lack of basic necessities along with the rest of the civilian population, continue to fulfil their functions to keep the world aware of the widening and deepening horrors taking place in Gaza.

Thanks to their work, the world is watching. They must be protected. There must be accountability.

XVII. WHO delivers health supplies to Al-Shifa Hospital, appeals for continued access to address urgent needs in north Gaza

On 17 December, the World Health Organization issued the following [press release](#).

WHO staff participated in a joint UN mission to Al-Shifa Hospital in north Gaza on 16 December to deliver health supplies and assess the situation in the facility. Partners on today's mission included OCHA, UNDSS, and UNMAS. The team delivered medicines and surgical supplies, orthopedic surgery equipment, and anesthesia materials and drugs to the hospital.

Al-Shifa Hospital, currently minimally functional, needs to urgently resume at least basic operations to continue serving the thousands in need of lifesaving health care.

Once the most important and largest referral hospital in Gaza, Al-Shifa now houses only a handful of doctors and a few nurses, together with 70 volunteers, working under what WHO staff described as “unbelievably challenging circumstances,” and calling it a “hospital in need of resuscitation.” The operating theatres and other major services remain nonfunctional due to lack of fuel, oxygen, specialized medical staff, and supplies. The hospital is only able to provide basic trauma stabilization, has no blood for transfusion, and hardly any staff to care for the constant flow of patients. Dialysis is being provided to approximately 30 patients a day, with the dialysis machines operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, using a small generator.

The team described the emergency department as a “bloodbath”, with hundreds of injured patients inside, and new patients arriving every minute. Patients with trauma injuries were being sutured on the floor, and limited to no pain management is available at the hospital. WHO staff said that the emergency department is so full that care must be exercised to not step on patients on the floor. Critical patients are being transferred to Al-Ahli Arab Hospital for surgeries.

Tens of thousands of displaced people are using the hospital building and grounds for shelter. A multi-pronged humanitarian response is needed to provide them with food, water and shelter.

Many of them asked our team to tell the world what is happening in the hope that their suffering might soon be eased. Al-Shifa Hospital continues to experience a severe shortage of food and safe water for health workers, patients, and displaced people. This reflects grave and growing concerns around persistent hunger across the Gaza Strip, and the consequences of malnutrition on people's health and susceptibility to infectious diseases.

WHO is committed to strengthening Al-Shifa Hospital in the coming weeks, so that it can resume at least basic functionality and continue to provide the lifesaving services that are needed at this critical time. Up to 20 operating theatres in the hospital, as well as post-operative care services, can be activated if provided with regular supplies of fuel, oxygen, medicines, food, and water. Substantial additional specialized medical, nursing and support staff, including emergency medical teams are also urgently needed.

Currently, Al-Ahli Arab Hospital remains the only partially functional hospital in north Gaza along with three minimally functional hospitals – Al-Shifa, Al Awda and Al Sahaba Medical Complex – down from 24 before the conflict. WHO is also gravely concerned at the unfolding situation at Kamal Adwan Hospital and is gathering information urgently.

As hostilities continue and health needs across the Gaza Strip increase, Al-Shifa Hospital, a cornerstone of Gaza's health system, must be urgently restored so that it can serve a besieged people trapped in a cycle of death, destruction, hunger, and disease.

XVIII. UN Special Coordinator briefs the Security Council

On 19 December, Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, delivered the following [briefing](#) to the Security Council.

I am devoting my regular briefing on the situation in the Middle East to the twenty-eighth report on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016). The Secretary-General's written report covers the period between 19 September and 7 December 2023.

As the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza rages on, 2023 ends as one of the deadliest in the history of this conflict, with the situation deteriorating on nearly all fronts.

Mister President,

Since the end of the written reporting period, hostilities have continued inside Gaza as Israeli forces advanced further into Khan Younis in the southern part of the Strip and intensified operations in reported Hamas strongholds in the north, in Jabaliya refugee camp and Shujaiya neighborhood, as well as at the Kamal Adwan hospital. Intensive Israeli airstrikes continued across the Strip.

Over a thousand more fatalities – overwhelmingly Palestinian – have taken place. The toll on civilians, including women and children, remains unbearable.

With more than one hundred Israeli hostages still held by Hamas, the Israeli Army announced it had retrieved the bodies of three hostages, two from a tunnel in the Jabaliya refugee camp and one woman. On 15 December, the IDF said that Israeli soldiers had mistakenly shot and killed three hostages in Shujaiya.

Hamas and other militant factions have also continued to indiscriminately fire rockets at areas in southern and central Israel, including a barrage aimed at Jerusalem on 15 December.

The delivery of humanitarian aid in the Strip continues to face nearly insurmountable challenges. Amid displacement of an unimaginable scale and active hostilities, the humanitarian response system is on the brink. Limited steps by Israel, including allowing entry of more fuel, food and cooking gas, and opening Kerem Shalom/Karem abu Salem for the entry of humanitarian supplies, are positive, but fall far short of what is needed to address the human catastrophe on the ground.

The northern part of the Strip remains mostly inaccessible to humanitarian actors due to insecurity, as well as access restrictions imposed by Israel.

Mr. President,

In our focus on Gaza, let us not forget that our attention during the first nine months of the year was on a West Bank in crisis, with mounting pressures from settlement activity – which I note more than doubled to reach a new annual record since 2017 – settler violence, increased Palestinian armed attacks, Israeli security forces operations, a rapidly deteriorating fiscal and economic situation, and a Palestinian Authority struggling to face these challenges. Most of these trends have continued and intensified.

On 8 December, Israeli forces killed six Palestinians, including a 14-year-old child and a local commander in the Fatah-affiliated Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, during an operation in Al Far'a Refugee Camp, which led to exchanges of fire with armed Palestinians.

Over 12-14 and 16-17 December, two large-scale Israeli operations took place in Jenin refugee camp and in Tulkarem, respectively. The operations included exchanges of fire with armed Palestinians, Israeli

drone strikes, and search operations. In Tulkarem there was extensive infrastructure damage from IDF bulldozers. Seventeen Palestinians were killed and dozens were arrested.

The Palestinian Authority's fiscal situation continues to be extremely precarious amidst broader economic concerns across the West Bank. Some 150,000 Palestinian workers have been unable to reach their jobs since Israel imposed strict entry restrictions following the 7 October attacks.

Mister President,

I remain concerned about the wider impacts of the war in Gaza and the risk for escalation in the region.

Daily exchanges of fire across the Blue Line have continued with the risk of miscalculation and escalation posing a grave threat to regional stability. It is imperative that Lebanon not be dragged into a regional conflagration and that the parties return to a cessation of hostilities under the framework of resolution 1701 (2006).

Meanwhile, in the Red Sea, the Houthis in Yemen have targeted numerous vessels by boarding parties, as well as by armed drones and missiles. Strikes have damaged a number of ships, with others interdicted by U.S. and other naval forces in the area, raising concerns over the safety of shipping through this vital trade artery. Four major shipping companies have reportedly directed their vessels not to transit through the Red Sea; while Israel's Eilat port has reported an 80 per cent drop in revenues since attacks began.

Mister President,

I will now turn to several observations regarding the implementation of the provisions of Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016) during the reporting period.

The violence that has been taking place since 7 October in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory – particularly in and around Gaza, has shaken the region, and most tragically, the lives of millions of Palestinians and Israelis.

I strongly condemn the abhorrent armed attacks by Hamas and others in Israel. Nothing can justify the acts of terror that were committed and the deliberate killing, maiming and abduction of civilians and other protected persons. Accounts of the attacks reveal acts of brutality that are impossible to accept or comprehend. I am appalled by the reports of sexual violence during the attacks; these must be vigorously investigated and prosecuted.

The indiscriminate firing of rockets towards Israeli population centers, which continues to this day, is a violation of international humanitarian law and must cease completely.

I welcome the release of 110 Israeli and foreign hostages and reiterate that all remaining hostages must be immediately and unconditionally released, in line with UNSCR 2712.

The magnitude of hostilities between Israel and Hamas and the scope of death and destruction in Gaza have been unprecedented and unbearable to witness. I unequivocally condemn the killing of civilians in Gaza –including women and children. I mourn the loss of every civilian, including 131 United Nations colleagues, the single largest loss of life in the history of the organization.

I remain gravely concerned by the impact of the ongoing hostilities on the humanitarian situation in Gaza. The current conditions are making it impossible for meaningful humanitarian operations to be conducted.

I am also deeply concerned by escalating tensions in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Intensified armed exchanges between Palestinians and Israeli security forces, predominantly in the context of Israeli operations, have led to exceedingly high levels of fatalities and arrests. I reiterate that security forces must exercise maximum restraint and use lethal force only when it is strictly unavoidable to protect life.

I am alarmed by the lethal attacks carried out by Israeli settlers against Palestinians and by Palestinians against Israelis in the occupied West Bank and Israel. All perpetrators of violence must be held accountable and swiftly brought to justice.

I am appalled at the numerous instances of officials glorifying violence and encouraging the killing of civilians. Such rhetoric is abhorrent and must be clearly rejected by leaders on all sides. Leaders have an obligation to clearly and explicitly condemn acts of terror and violence directed against civilians.

I remain deeply troubled by the relentless expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, that is impeding access by Palestinians to their land and resources, and threatening the viability of a future independent Palestinian State. I reiterate that Israeli settlements constitute a flagrant violation of United Nations resolutions and international law and call on the Government of Israel to cease the advancement of all settlement activity immediately.

Mr. President,

This war has, once again, served as a devastating and tragic reminder that there is no substitute for a legitimate political process that will resolve the core issues driving the conflict. It is critical at this important junction to enable the parties to re-engage on the long-delayed political path to a two-State solution. I urge Israelis, Palestinians, the States of the region and the broader international community to work together towards this goal. The UN efforts to support this objective has already begun through active consultations in the region. Our work must continue.

The United Nations remains committed to supporting Palestinians and Israelis in ending the occupation and resolving the conflict in line with international law, relevant United Nations resolutions and bilateral agreements in pursuit of two States – Israel and an independent, democratic, viable and sovereign Palestinian State, of which Gaza is an integral part – living side by side in peace and security within secure and recognized borders, on the basis of the 1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States.

XIX. Gaza: UN Human Rights Chief urges ceasefire as civilians pushed to frontier amid escalation

On 19 December, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights issued the following [press release](#).

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk said today he feared for the rapidly increasing number of civilians in Gaza increasingly corralled towards the border with Egypt, as hostilities continue to escalate, including wave after wave of Israeli airstrikes, naval shelling, tank fire and sniper attacks, as well as the indiscriminate firing of rockets by Palestinian armed groups into Israel.

Türk implored all parties to heed calls by the international community for a sustainable ceasefire. “The call for a ceasefire – on human rights and humanitarian grounds – is getting louder by the day, and must be heeded,” said the High Commissioner.

“As those in Gaza endure such immense suffering, despair and heartbreak are growing more intense across the world. More than 19,400 Palestinians, most of them women and children, have been killed since 7 October 2023. Several thousand more are believed buried under the rubble.”

Strikes on civilian infrastructure that serve as shelters, such as hospitals, schools and religious facilities, continue to be reported, he said, causing deaths and injuries and forcing other IDPs to move yet again. The Human Rights Office has also documented allegations of arbitrary detention, torture and unlawful killings, including at schools and hospitals in Northern Gaza and Gaza City during operations conducted by Israeli forces.

“Allegations of breaches of the laws of war must be immediately and fully investigated,” Türk said. “Those responsible for such acts must be held to account, and justice served.”

Nearly two million people have been displaced, many of them forced to move multiple times even as bombs rain down around them. Israeli Forces continue issuing evacuation orders in a confusing and contradictory manner, he said. “Now, Palestinians are being forced into smaller and smaller areas, in a mass displacement up to the Gaza-Egyptian border while military operations continue to encroach ever closer. There is simply nowhere left in Gaza for them to go.”

Rafah has become the epicentre of displacement with over one million people – almost half of the population – concentrated in extremely overcrowded and unbearable living conditions, exacerbated by the onset of winter.

Türk said the trickle of humanitarian relief crossing from Egypt, as well as Sunday’s opening of the Kerem Shalom crossing, was only enough for a fraction of those in need as Israel’s siege on Gaza remains in force. Thousands gather in front of aid distribution centres seeking essential supplies and protection. Tensions and daily struggles for basic needs, with instances of desperate displaced people stopping trucks to forcibly obtain food.

Civilians in Northern Gaza are getting no relief at all. “In the north, an estimated 100,000 civilians remain completely isolated from relief efforts, and too scared to move amid the relentless bombing, tank patrols and for fear of snipers,” Türk said. “They are trapped in a living hell.

“The international community has clearly expressed its opinion: the fighting must stop. The remaining hostages must also be released, as must those arbitrarily detained by Israeli forces. And the parties to the conflict — along with those States with influence – must work to support a credible political process that will lead to the agreed two-State solution.”

XX. General Assembly adopts resolutions on natural resources, right to self-determination

On 19 December, the General Assembly adopted resolution [A/RES/78/170](#) on “Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources” and resolution [A/RES/78/192](#) on “The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination”. The texts and voting results are replicated below.

78/170. Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution [77/187](#) of 14 December 2022, and taking note of Economic and Social Council resolution [2023/34](#) of 26 July 2023,

Recalling also its resolutions [58/292](#) of 6 May 2004 and [59/251](#) of 22 December 2004,

Reaffirming the principle of the permanent sovereignty of peoples under foreign occupation over their natural resources,

Guided by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, affirming the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, and recalling relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) of 22 November 1967, [465 \(1980\)](#) of 1 March 1980, [497 \(1981\)](#) of 17 December 1981 and [2334 \(2016\)](#) of 23 December 2016,

Recalling its resolution [2625 \(XXV\)](#) of 24 October 1970,

Bearing in mind its resolution [70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”,

Reaffirming the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,⁷⁴ to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967,

Recalling, in this regard, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights⁷⁵ and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,⁷⁶ and affirming that these human rights instruments must be respected in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as in the occupied Syrian Golan,

Recalling also the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁷⁷ and recalling further its resolutions [ES-10/15](#) of 20 July 2004 and [ES-10/17](#) of 15 December 2006,

Recalling further its resolution [67/19](#) of 29 November 2012,

Taking note of the accession by Palestine to several human rights treaties and the core humanitarian law treaties, as well as to other international treaties,

Expressing its concern about the exploitation by Israel, the occupying Power, of the natural resources of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967,

Expressing its grave concern about the extensive destruction by Israel, the occupying Power, of agricultural land and orchards in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the uprooting of a vast number of fruit-bearing trees and the destruction of farms and greenhouses, and the grave environmental and economic impact in this regard,

⁷⁴ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

⁷⁵ See resolution [2200 A \(XXI\)](#), annex.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ See [A/ES-10/273](#) and [A/ES-10/273/Corr.1](#).

Expressing its grave concern also about the widespread destruction caused by Israel, the occupying Power, to vital infrastructure, including water pipelines, sewage networks and electricity networks, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in particular in the Gaza Strip during the military operations of July and August 2014, which, inter alia, has polluted the environment and which negatively affects the functioning of water and sanitation systems and the water supply and other natural resources of the Palestinian people, and stressing the urgency of the reconstruction and development of water and other vital civilian infrastructure, including the project for the desalination facility for the Gaza Strip,

Expressing its grave concern further about the negative impact on the environment and on reconstruction and development efforts of unexploded ordnance that remains in the Gaza Strip as a result of the conflict in July and August 2014, and commending the efforts of the Mine Action Service of the United Nations for the safe removal of such ordnance,

Expressing its grave concern about the chronic energy shortage in the Gaza Strip and its detrimental impact on the operation of water and sanitation facilities, which threaten to further erode groundwater resources, of which only 5 per cent remains potable,

Recalling the 2009 report by the United Nations Environment Programme regarding the grave environmental situation in the Gaza Strip, and relevant reports by the United Nations country team, including “Gaza in 2020: a liveable place?”, “Gaza: two years after” and “Gaza ten years later”, and stressing the need for follow-up to the recommendations contained therein,

Deploing the detrimental impact of the Israeli settlements on Palestinian and other Arab natural resources, especially as a result of the confiscation of land and the forced diversion of water resources, including the destruction of orchards and crops and the seizure of water wells by Israeli settlers, and of the dire socioeconomic consequences in this regard,

Recalling the report of the independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,⁷⁸

Aware of the detrimental impact on Palestinian natural resources being caused by the unlawful construction of the wall by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and of its grave effect as well on the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people,

Stressing the urgency of achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement on all tracks, on the basis of Security Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#), [338 \(1973\)](#) of 22 October 1973, [425 \(1978\)](#) of 19 March 1978, [1397 \(2002\)](#) of 12 March 2002 and [2334 \(2016\)](#), the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative⁷⁹ and the Quartet performance-based road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,⁸⁰ as endorsed by the Council in its resolution [1515 \(2003\)](#) of 19 November 2003 and supported by the Council in its resolution [1850 \(2008\)](#) of 16 December 2008,

⁷⁸ [A/HRC/22/63](#).

⁷⁹ [A/56/1026-S/2002/932](#), annex II, resolution 14/221.

⁸⁰ [S/2003/529](#), annex.

Stressing also, in this regard, the need for respect for the obligation upon Israel under the road map to freeze settlement activity, including so-called “natural growth”, and to dismantle all settlement outposts erected since March 2001,

Stressing further the need for respect and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Recalling that the Security Council, in its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), underlined that it would not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations,

Recalling also the need to end all acts of violence, including acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction,

Taking note of the report prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan, as transmitted by the Secretary-General,⁸¹

1. *Reaffirms* the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and of the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources, including land, water and energy resources;

2. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, cease the exploitation, damage, cause of loss or depletion and endangerment of the natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan;

3. *Recognizes* the right of the Palestinian people to claim restitution as a result of any exploitation, damage, loss or depletion or endangerment of their natural resources resulting from illegal measures taken by Israel, the occupying Power, and Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and expresses the hope that this issue will be dealt with within the framework of the final status negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides;

4. *Stresses* that the wall and settlements being constructed by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, are contrary to international law and are seriously depriving the Palestinian people of their natural resources, and calls in this regard for full compliance with the legal obligations affirmed in the 9 July 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice⁸² and in relevant United Nations resolutions, including General Assembly resolution [ES-10/15](#);

5. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and to cease immediately and completely all policies and measures aimed at the alteration of the character and status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

6. *Also calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to bring a halt to all actions, including those perpetrated by Israeli settlers, harming the environment, including the dumping of all kinds of waste materials, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, which gravely

⁸¹ [A/78/127-E/2023/95](#).

⁸² See [A/ES-10/273](#) and [A/ES-10/273/Corr.1](#).

threaten their natural resources, namely water and land resources, and which pose an environmental, sanitation and health threat to the civilian populations;

7. *Further calls upon* Israel to cease its destruction of vital infrastructure, including water pipelines, sewage networks and electricity networks, and to cease its demolition and confiscation of Palestinian homes and civilian infrastructure, agricultural lands and water wells, which, inter alia, have a negative impact on the natural resources of the Palestinian people, stresses the urgent need to advance reconstruction and development projects in this regard, including in the Gaza Strip, and calls for support for the necessary efforts in this regard, in line with the commitments made at, inter alia, the Cairo International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza, held on 12 October 2014;

8. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to remove all obstacles to the implementation of critical environmental projects, including sewage treatment plants in the Gaza Strip and the reconstruction and development of water infrastructure, including the project for the desalination facility for the Gaza Strip;

9. *Also calls upon* Israel not to impede Palestinian development and export of discovered oil and natural gas reserves;

10. *Calls for* the immediate and safe removal of all unexploded ordnance in the Gaza Strip and for support for the efforts of the Mine Action Service of the United Nations in this regard, and welcomes the extensive efforts exerted by the Mine Action Service to date;

11. *Encourages* all States and international organizations to continue to actively pursue policies to ensure respect for their obligations under international law with regard to all illegal Israeli practices and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly Israeli settlement activities and the exploitation of natural resources;

12. *Underscores*, in this regard, the call by the Security Council, in its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), upon all States to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution, including with regard to the cumulative impact of the exploitation, damage and depletion by Israel of natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and with regard to the impact of such practices on the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals,⁸³ and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-ninth session the item entitled “Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources”.

*49th plenary meeting
19 December 2023*

Adopted by 158 votes to 6, with 13 abstentions.

In favour: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina

⁸³ See resolution [70/1](#).

Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against: Canada, Israel, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United States of America.

Abstentions: Australia, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guatemala, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.

78/192. The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination

The General Assembly,

Aware that the development of friendly relations among nations, based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, is among the purposes and principles of the United Nations, as defined in the Charter,

Recalling, in this regard, its resolution [2625 \(XXV\)](#) of 24 October 1970, entitled “Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations”,

Bearing in mind the International Covenants on Human Rights,⁸⁴ the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,⁸⁵ the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples⁸⁶ and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993,⁸⁷

Recalling the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations,⁸⁸

Recalling also the United Nations Millennium Declaration,⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Resolution [2200 A \(XXI\)](#), annex.

⁸⁵ Resolution [217 A \(III\)](#).

⁸⁶ Resolution [1514 \(XV\)](#).

⁸⁷ [A/CONF.157/24 \(Part I\)](#), chap. III.

⁸⁸ Resolution [50/6](#).

⁸⁹ Resolution [55/2](#).

Recalling further the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁹⁰ and noting in particular the reply of the Court, including on the right of peoples to self-determination, which is a right *erga omnes*,⁹¹

Recalling the conclusion of the Court, in its advisory opinion of 9 July 2004, that the construction of the wall by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, along with measures previously taken, severely impedes the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination,⁹²

Stressing the urgency of achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement between the Palestinian and Israeli sides, based on the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative⁹³ and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,⁹⁴

Stressing also the need for respect for and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and recalling in this regard its resolution [58/292](#) of 6 May 2004,

Recalling its resolution [77/208](#) of 15 December 2022,

Recalling also its resolution [67/19](#) of 29 November 2012,

Affirming the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

1. *Reaffirms* the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to their independent State of Palestine;

2. *Urges* all States and the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to continue to support and assist the Palestinian people in the early realization of their right to self-determination.

*50th plenary meeting
19 December 2023*

Adopted by 172 votes to 4 with 10 Abstentions.

In favour: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic

⁹⁰ See [A/ES-10/273](#) and [A/ES-10/273/Corr.1](#).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, advisory opinion, para. 88.

⁹² *Ibid.*, para. 122.

⁹³ [A/56/1026-S/2002/932](#), annex II, resolution 14/221.

⁹⁴ [S/2003/529](#), annex.

People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Israel, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, United States.

Abstentions: Cameroon, Guatemala, Kiribati, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, South Sudan, Togo, Tonga, Tuvalu.

XXI. WFP report predicts famine if Gaza conflict continues

On 21 December, the World Food Programme issued the following [press release](#).

More than one in four households in Gaza currently face extreme hunger, and there is a risk of famine unless access to adequate food, clean water, health and sanitation services is restored, according to a new Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report released today. IPC is a multi-stakeholder platform that analyses data to determine the severity and magnitude of hunger crises, according to internationally-recognized scientific standards.

This latest food security analysis for Gaza, which includes data from the World Food Programme (WFP), other UN agencies and non-governmental organizations, confirmed that the entire population of Gaza – roughly 2.2 million people – are in crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity. The IPC report further highlighted that 26 percent of Gazans (576,600 people) have exhausted their food supplies and coping capacities and face catastrophic hunger (IPC Phase 5) and starvation.

“WFP has warned of this coming catastrophe for weeks. Tragically, without the safe, consistent access we have been calling for, the situation is desperate, and no one in Gaza is safe from starvation.” said WFP’s Executive Director Cindy McCain.

According to the IPC, there is a risk of famine occurring within the next six months if the current situation of intense conflict and restricted humanitarian access persists. From earlier assessments, WFP food security experts had already established that Gazans have used up all their resources, livelihoods have collapsed, bakeries are destroyed, shops are empty, and families can’t find food. People told WFP staff that they often go entire days without eating and that many adults go hungry so that children can eat.

“These are not just numbers – there are individual children, women and men behind these alarming statistics,” said WFP Chief Economist Arif Husain. “The complexity, magnitude and speed that this crisis has unfolded is unprecedented.”

More emergency food and multi-sectoral assistance is essential to prevent wide-spread deaths. The recent seven-day pause highlighted that WFP and partners can provide assistance when the conditions allow, and the re-opening of the Kerem Shalom border crossing sets the stage for more food and other relief supplies to flow into Gaza, which needs to continue and accelerate with additional border crossings and operating conditions inside Gaza that allow for safe and orderly deliveries to all people in need.

“We cannot stand by and watch people starve. Humanitarian access is needed now for supplies to flow into and throughout Gaza and for civilians to safely receive life-saving aid,” said McCain. “More than anything, what is needed now is peace. WFP reiterates the call for a humanitarian ceasefire – the world must come together now to save lives.”

XXII. Lethal combination of hunger and disease to lead to more deaths in Gaza, WHO warns

On 21 December, the World Health Organization issued the following [statement](#).

Hunger is ravaging Gaza, and this is expected to increase illness across the Strip, most acutely among children, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and older people.

In new estimates released today, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) global partnership, which includes WHO, said Gaza is facing “catastrophic levels of food insecurity,” with the risk of famine “increasing each day.”

An unprecedented 93% of the population in Gaza is facing crisis levels of hunger, with insufficient food and high levels of malnutrition. At least 1 in 4 households are facing “catastrophic conditions”: experiencing an extreme lack of food and starvation and having resorted to selling off their possessions and other extreme measures to afford a simple meal. Starvation, destitution and death are evident.

On recent missions to north Gaza, WHO staff say that every single person they spoke to in Gaza is hungry. Wherever they went, including hospitals and emergency wards, people asked them for food. “We move around Gaza delivering medical supplies and people rush to our trucks hoping it’s food,” they said, calling it “an indicator of the desperation.”

Infectious diseases are thriving.

Gaza is already experiencing soaring rates of infectious diseases. Over 100 000 cases of diarrhoea have been reported since mid-October. Half of these are among young children under the age of 5 years, case numbers that are 25 times what was reported before the conflict.

Over 150 000 cases of upper respiratory infection, and numerous cases of meningitis, skin rashes, scabies, lice and chickenpox have been reported. Hepatitis is also suspected as many people present with the tell-tale signs of jaundice. While a healthy body can more easily fight off these diseases, a wasted and weakened body will struggle. Hunger weakens the body’s defences and opens the door to disease.

Malnutrition increases the risk of children dying from illnesses like diarrhoea, pneumonia and measles, especially in a setting where they lack access to life-saving health services. Even if the child survives, wasting can have life-long impacts as it stunts growth and impairs cognitive development.

Breastfeeding mothers are also at high risk of malnutrition. From 0-6 months of age, a mother’s milk is the best and safest food a baby can get. This protects the child from nutritional deficiencies and catching deadly diseases such as diarrhoea, especially when access to safe drinking water is extremely limited.

Mental health issues, on the rise across the population in Gaza, including among women, could further impact breastfeeding rates.

Lack of sanitation and hygiene, and a collapsing health system, add to the toxic mix.

Over 1.9 million people have been displaced from their homes, of whom over 1.4 million are staying in overcrowded shelters. These conditions are ripe for a continued rise in infectious diseases. In Gaza today, on average, there is only one shower for every 4500 people and one toilet for every 220. Clean water remains scarce and there are rising levels of outdoor defecation. These conditions make the spread of infectious diseases inevitable.

Tragically, access to health services across Gaza has plummeted as the war continues to degrade the health system. With the health system on its knees, those facing the deadly combination of hunger and disease are left with few options.

The people of Gaza, who have already suffered enough, now face death from starvation and diseases that could be easily treated with a functioning health system. This must stop. Food and other aid must flow in far greater amounts. WHO reiterates its call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.

XXIII. CERD reminds States Parties of their obligation to prevent crimes against humanity and genocide

On 21 December, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination acting under its Early Warning and Urgent Action Procedure adopted the following [decision](#).

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination,

Acting under its Early Warning and Urgent Action Procedure;

Recalling its Statement 5 (2023) of 27 October 2023 on the ongoing armed conflict in Israel and the State of Palestine, the scale of violence and the humanitarian catastrophe in the occupied Gaza Strip;⁹⁵

Gravely concerned about the resumption of the brutal hostilities in the occupied Gaza Strip on 1 December 2023 after a seven-day “pause”;

Deeply concerned about the launching of rockets towards Israel, taking of hostages, and the brutal attacks carried out by Hamas and other armed groups on 7 October 2023, resulting in the death of at least 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals, including at least 33 children, and the injuries of more than 5,400;⁹⁶

Deeply shocked about the intensified, brutal and indiscriminate Israeli bombardments from the air, land and sea all across the occupied Gaza Strip and the expansion of the Israeli military ground operation to the south of the occupied Gaza Strip, resulting in the killing of more than 19,600 Palestinians, including at least 7,700 children and 5,100 women, and the injuries of more than 52,500 since 7 October 2023, as well as that several thousand reportedly being trapped under rubble;⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Statement on Israel and the State of Palestine, 27 October 2023.

⁹⁶ Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel - reported impact, Day 73, 19 December 2023.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

Highly concerned that 1.9 out of 2.2 million Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip, which amounts to nearly 85 per cent of the population, are reportedly forced to flee their homes, as well as concerned about the destruction or damage of 60 per cent of housing units in the occupied Gaza Strip;⁹⁸

Deeply concerned about reports on the damage of hundreds of education facilities, mostly operated by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and that most hospitals and healthcare centres in the occupied Gaza Strip have gone out of service, with only 8 out of 36 hospitals still functioning;⁹⁹

Highly concerned about reports that half of the population in occupied Gaza Strip is starving in a situation of extreme or severe hunger, and that 90 per cent of the population regularly go without food for a whole day;¹⁰⁰

Highly concerned about reports that displaced Palestinian children are accessing only 1.5 to 2 litres of water each day, while for survival alone, the estimated minimum is 3 litres per day, and that waterborne diseases such as cholera and chronic diarrhoea are particularly heightened given the lack of safe water;¹⁰¹

Highly alarmed about the reported killing of at least 136 staff of the United Nations as a result of the ongoing Israeli military operation in the occupied Gaza Strip since October 2023;¹⁰²

Gravely concerned about the racist hate speech, incitement to violence and genocidal actions, as well as dehumanizing rhetoric targeted at Palestinians since 7 October 2023 by Israeli senior government officials, members of the Parliament, politicians and public figures;

Deeply concerned about the impact of the ongoing Israeli military operation throughout the occupied Gaza Strip on the Palestinian population in terms of high number of civilian casualties and injuries due to the Israeli military heavy bombardments, indiscriminate attacks using explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas, collective punishment and obstruction of humanitarian aid, as well as about the pattern of Israeli attacks that target or impact civilian infrastructure leading to a catastrophic humanitarian crisis in the occupied Gaza Strip and raise serious concerns regarding the obligation of Israel and other State parties to prevent crimes against humanity and genocide;

Highly alarmed about the deteriorating human rights situation in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem since October 7, including the restrictions on freedom of movement, the increase in unlawful use of lethal force by the Israeli forces and increase in settler violence, leading to killings and injuries of Palestinians, including children,¹⁰³ as well as the significant increase in arbitrary arrests and detention of Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, in which more

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid. and Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #73, 19 December 2023.

¹⁰⁰ Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #73, 19 December 2023.

¹⁰¹ 'Barely a drop to drink': children in the Gaza Strip do not access 90 per cent of their normal water use, Press release by UNICEF, 20 December 2023.

¹⁰² Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel - reported impact, Day 73, 19 December 2023.

¹⁰³ Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #73, 19 December 2023.

than 3,000 Palestinian have been arrested and six Palestinians have died in Israeli custody since 7 October 2023;¹⁰⁴

~~—Takes note of the letter by the UN Secretary-General to the Security Council, on 6 December 2023, invoking Article 99 of the UN Charter, in which he reiterated his call for a humanitarian ceasefire and highlighting the “fast deteriorating into a catastrophe” of the situation and “potentially irreversible implications for Palestinians as a whole and for peace and security in the region”;~~¹⁰⁵

Notes that the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court received a referral concerning the situation in the State of Palestine on 17 November 2023 and that the investigation into the situation in the State of Palestine, which was initiated on 3 March 2021, would extend to the escalation of hostilities and violence since 7 October 2023;¹⁰⁶

Also notes that the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, established by the United Nations Human Rights Council in March 2021, is investigating violations of international law in light of the violence erupted on 7 October 2023 and to identify those responsible for violations and abuses of international law on all sides, both those directly committing international crimes and those in positions of command responsibility;¹⁰⁷

Takes note of the call of the Human Rights Council's Special Procedures mandate holders on the international community to prevent genocide against the Palestinian people;¹⁰⁸

Notes the call of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to “all parties to heed calls by the international community for a sustainable ceasefire” and to immediately and fully investigate all allegations of breaches of international law;¹⁰⁹

Urges Israel, the State of Palestine and other State parties to institute an immediate and sustained ceasefire in the occupied Gaza Strip;

Reiterates its Statement 5 (2023) of 27 October 2023, particularly:

(a) Calling upon Israel to fully respect its international obligations, in particular those arising from the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;

¹⁰⁴ UN Human Rights Office - OPT: Dramatic rise in detention of Palestinians across occupied West Bank, 1 December 2023.

¹⁰⁵ The Secretary-General letter to the President of Security Council invoking Article 99 of the United Nations [Charter](#), 6 December 2023.

¹⁰⁶ Statement of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim A.A. Khan KC, on the Situation in the State of Palestine: receipt of a referral from five States Parties, 17 November 2023

¹⁰⁷ Commission of Inquiry collecting evidence of war crimes committed by all sides in Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories since 7 October 2023, 10 October 2023.

¹⁰⁸ UN experts call on international community to prevent genocide against the Palestinian people,

¹⁰⁹ Türk urges ceasefire as civilians pushed to frontier amid escalation, 19 December 2023.

(b) Urging the release of hostages taken by Hamas and other armed groups as well as the release of Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem and Palestinian citizens of Israel who are arbitrarily detained by Israel;

(c) Calling upon Israel and other State parties to provide all necessary financial and humanitarian aid to Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip and the creation of humanitarian corridors that allow people to leave Gaza and return;

(d) Urging Israel to ensure that all Palestinians under its effective control, particularly those in Gaza Strip, enjoy full rights under the Convention without discrimination especially, their right to life and security of person, as well as their right to medical care and right to freedom of movement;

(e) Calling upon Israel to firmly condemn any form of hate speech and distance itself from racist hate speech expressed by politicians and public figures, including members of the government and parliament, and ensure that such acts are investigated and adequately and robustly punished.

Urges Israel and State of Palestine to conduct effective, thorough and impartial investigations into allegations of violations and abuses of human rights committed during the ongoing armed conflict since 7 October 2023, and prosecute and punish perpetrators of violations with penalties commensurate to the offences;

Calls upon Israel and the State of Palestine to fully cooperate with the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and the Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, in their investigations into allegations of human rights violations and abuses committed since 7 October 2023;

Calls upon Israel to grant access to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in order to engage with relevant stakeholders, as well as to look into and document significant violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law that are alleged to have taken place in the context of the current conflict in the occupied Palestinian territories, including as committed by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups on and since 7 October 2023;

Calls upon all State parties to fully respect their international obligations, in particular those arising from the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and to cooperate to bring an end the violations that are taking place and to prevent atrocity crimes, particularly genocide;

Calls upon all State parties to ensure that all those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity, as well as any other international crimes committed in the ongoing armed conflict, especially persons with command responsibility, are promptly brought to justice.

XXIV. Security Council adopts a resolution on protection of civilians and enabling of immediate humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in Gaza

On 22 December, Security Council adopted Resolution [2720 \(2023\)](#), which received 13 votes in favour, none against and 2 abstentions. The text of the resolution is reproduced below.

The Security Council,

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

Recalling all of its relevant resolutions, particularly resolution 2712 (2023), which, *inter alia*, demands that all parties comply with their obligations under international law, notably with regard to the protection of civilians, calls for urgent and extended humanitarian pauses and corridors throughout the Gaza Strip for a sufficient number of days to enable full, rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access and to enable urgent rescue and recovery efforts, and calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, as well as ensuring immediate humanitarian access,

Reaffirming that all parties to conflicts must adhere to their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as applicable,

Stressing that the Gaza Strip constitutes an integral part of the territory occupied in 1967, and reiterating the vision of the two-State solution, with the Gaza Strip as part of the Palestinian State,

Expressing deep concern at the dire and rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and its grave impact on the civilian population, underlining the urgent need for full, rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access into and throughout the entire Gaza Strip, and taking note of the concerning reports from the leadership of the United Nations and humanitarian organizations in this regard, *reaffirming its strong concern* for the disproportionate effect that the conflict is having on the lives and well-being of children, women, and other civilians in vulnerable situations, and *stressing* the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence,

Stressing the obligation to respect and protect humanitarian relief and medical personnel,

Reaffirming its call for all parties to refrain from depriving the civilian population in the Gaza Strip of basic services and humanitarian assistance indispensable to their survival, consistent with international humanitarian law,

Commending the indispensable and ongoing efforts of the United Nations, its specialized agencies and all humanitarian and medical personnel in the Gaza Strip to alleviate the impact of the conflict on the people in the Gaza Strip, and *expressing* condolences for all civilians, including humanitarian and medical personnel, killed in the course of this conflict,

Welcoming the efforts of Egypt to facilitate the use of the Rafah Border crossing by United Nations humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners for the provision of humanitarian assistance for people in need throughout the Gaza Strip,

Taking note of the 15 December 2023 decision by the Government of Israel to open its crossing at Karem Abu Salem/Kerem Shalom for direct delivery of humanitarian assistance to Palestinian civilians in Gaza, which should ease congestion and help facilitate the provision of life-saving assistance to those who urgently need it, and *emphasizing* the need to continue working closely with all relevant parties to expand the delivery and distribution of humanitarian assistance, while confirming its humanitarian nature and ensuring that it reaches its civilian destination,

Encouraging engagement with relevant states in the implementation of this resolution,

Welcoming the implementation of a recent ‘humanitarian pause’ in the Gaza Strip, and *expressing* appreciation for the diplomatic efforts of Egypt, the State of Qatar, and other states in this regard, and also expressing grave concerns as to the impact the resumption of hostilities has had on civilians,

Recognizing that the civilian population in the Gaza Strip must have access to sufficient quantities of assistance that they need, including enough food, water, sanitation, electricity, telecommunications and medical services essential for their survival, and that the provision of humanitarian supplies in the Gaza Strip needs to be sufficient to alleviate the massive humanitarian needs of the Palestinian civilian population throughout the Gaza Strip, and *recognizing* the importance of resuming commercial imports of essential goods and services into the Gaza Strip,

Welcoming financial contributions and pledges by member states in support of the civilian population in Gaza, and *taking note* of the International Humanitarian Conference for the Civilian Population of Gaza held in Paris on 9 November 2023 and its follow-up meeting on 6 December 2023,

1. *Reiterates* its demand that all parties to the conflict comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, including with regard to the conduct of hostilities and the protection of civilians and civilian objects, humanitarian access, and the protection of humanitarian personnel and their freedom of movement, and the duty, as applicable, of ensuring the food and medical supplies, among others, of the population, *recalls* that civilian and humanitarian facilities, including hospitals, medical facilities, schools, places of worship, and facilities of the UN, as well as humanitarian personnel, and medical personnel, and their means of transport, must be respected and protected, according to international humanitarian law, and *affirms* that nothing in this resolution absolves the parties of these obligations;

2. *Reaffirms* the obligations of the parties to the conflict under international humanitarian law regarding the provision of humanitarian assistance, *demand*s that they allow, facilitate and enable the immediate, safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale directly to the Palestinian civilian population throughout the Gaza Strip, and in this regard *calls* for urgent steps to immediately allow safe, unhindered, and expanded humanitarian access and to create the conditions for a sustainable cessation of hostilities;

3. *Demand*s that the parties to the conflict allow and facilitate the use of all available routes to and throughout the entire Gaza Strip, including border crossings, including full and prompt implementation of the announced opening of the Karem Abu Salem/Kerem Shalom Border Crossing, for the provision of humanitarian assistance in order to ensure that humanitarian personnel and humanitarian assistance, including fuel, food, and medical supplies and emergency shelter assistance, reaches the civilian population in need throughout the Gaza Strip without diversion and through the most direct routes, as well as for material and equipment to repair and ensure the functioning of critical infrastructure and to provide essential services, without prejudice to the obligations of the parties to the conflict under international humanitarian law, and *stresses* the importance of respecting and protecting border crossings and maritime infrastructure used for the delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General, with the objective of expediting the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the civilian population in the Gaza Strip, to appoint a Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator with responsibility for facilitating, coordinating, monitoring, and verifying in Gaza, as appropriate, the humanitarian nature of all humanitarian relief consignments to Gaza provided through states which are not party to the conflict, and *further requests* that the Coordinator expeditiously establish a UN mechanism for accelerating the provision of humanitarian relief consignments to Gaza through states which are not party to the conflict, consulting all relevant parties, with the goal of expediting, streamlining, and accelerating the process of providing assistance while continuing to help ensure that aid reaches its civilian destination, and *demand*s that the parties to the conflict cooperate with the Coordinator to fulfil their mandate without delay or obstruction;

5. *Requests* that the Coordinator be appointed expeditiously;

6. *Determines* that the Coordinator will have the necessary personnel and equipment in Gaza, under the authority of the United Nations, to perform these, and other functions as determined by the Security Council, and *requests* that the Coordinator report to the Security Council on its work, with an initial report within 20 days and thereafter every 90 days through 30 September 2024;

7. *Demands* the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, as well as ensuring humanitarian access to address medical needs of all hostages;

8. *Demands* the provision of fuel to Gaza at levels that will meet requisite humanitarian needs;

9. *Calls for* all parties to adhere to international humanitarian law and in this regard deplores all attacks against civilians and civilian objects, as well as all violence and hostilities against civilians, and all acts of terrorism;

10. *Reaffirms* the obligations of all parties under international humanitarian law, including with regard to 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, and with regard to refraining from attacking, destroying, removing or rendering useless objects that are indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, as well as respecting and protecting humanitarian personnel and consignments used for humanitarian relief operations;

11. *Reaffirms* that civilian objects, including places of refuge, including within United Nations facilities and their surroundings, are protected under international humanitarian law, and *rejects* forced displacement of the civilian population, including children, in violation of international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law;

12. *Reiterates* its unwavering commitment to the vision of the two-State solution where two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders, consistent with international law and relevant UN resolutions, and *in this regard stresses* the importance of unifying the Gaza Strip with the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority;

13. *Demands* that all parties to the conflict take all appropriate steps to ensure the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel, those of its specialized agencies, and all other personnel engaged in humanitarian relief activities consistent with international humanitarian law, without prejudice to their freedom of movement and access, *stresses* the need not to hinder these efforts, and *recalls* that humanitarian relief personnel must be respected and protected;

14. *Demands* implementation of resolution 2712 (2023) in full, *requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council in writing within five working days of the adoption of this resolution on the implementation of resolution 2712 (2023), and thereafter as necessary, and *calls upon* all parties concerned to make full use of the humanitarian notification and deconfliction mechanisms in place to protect all humanitarian sites, including UN facilities, and to help facilitate the movement of aid convoys, without prejudice to the obligations of the parties to uphold international humanitarian law;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of this resolution in the regular reporting to the Council;

16. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

Voting Results:

In favour: Albania, Brazil, China, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom.

Abstentions: Russian Federation, United States.

XXV. Israel working to expel civilian population of Gaza, UN human rights expert warns

On 22 December, Paula Gaviria Betancur, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, issued a [statement](#) reflected in the following press release.

Israel is seeking to permanently alter the composition of Gaza's population with ever-expanding evacuation orders and widespread and systematic attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure in southern areas of the besieged enclave, a UN expert warned today.

"Israel has reneged on promises of safety made to those who complied with its order to evacuate northern Gaza two months ago. Now, they have been forcibly displaced again, alongside the population of southern Gaza," said Paula Gaviria Betancur, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

"Where will the people of Gaza have left to go tomorrow?" she said.

"As evacuation orders and military operations continue to expand and civilians are subjected to relentless attacks on a daily basis, the only logical conclusion is that Israel's military operation in Gaza aims to deport the majority of the civilian population *en masse*," the Special Rapporteur said.

"Gaza's housing and civilian infrastructure have been razed to the ground, frustrating any realistic prospects for displaced Gazans to return home, repeating a long history of mass forced displacement of Palestinians by Israel," she said.

Since 7 October, 1.9 million people – 85 percent of Gaza's population – have been internally displaced. The scope of evacuation orders has confined them to less than one-third of the Gaza Strip's territory. Most IDPs live in overcrowded conditions where communicable diseases are on the rise, and struggle to access food, water, electricity healthcare, sanitation, and shelter. These conditions are expected to worsen with the onset of winter.

"Gaza has long been one of the world's most densely populated territories. The confinement of the entire civilian population to a tiny fraction of the Gaza Strip has created an untenable situation for IDPs, particularly women, children including unaccompanied minors, older persons, and persons with serious medical conditions and disabilities," the expert said.

Gaviria Betancur urged the international community, and Israel's allies in particular, to recognise the blatant disregard for international humanitarian and human rights law that has characterised the current conflict.

"The principles of proportionality and distinction between civilians and combatants have been completely disregarded. Hospitals, schools, and shelters have been deliberately targeted without credible evidence that they are military objectives, or attacked without precautions to minimise incidental loss of life or injury to civilians," the Special Rapporteur said.

"Civilians in areas under evacuation order, as well as in so-called "safe zones", unilaterally designated by Israeli forces against international humanitarian law, have been the target of indiscriminate attacks which have killed nearly 19,000 Palestinians and injured over 51,000," the UN expert said.

“Many others have said it before – but it cannot be said enough – there is no safe place in Gaza,” Gaviria Betancur said.

Evacuation orders issued to civilians by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have been inaccurate, self-contradictory, and largely depend on electricity and telecommunications networks, often subject to an illegal Israeli blackout.

The Special Rapporteur recalled that under international law, individuals that do not comply with evacuation orders do not lose their right to protection. Israel has failed to honour its obligations under international law to ensure displacement does not violate the rights to life, dignity, liberty and security of those affected, and ensure IDPs enjoy an adequate standard of living and access to humanitarian assistance, Gaviria Betancur said.

“Israel’s illegal blockade and stranglehold on the entry of humanitarian aid have left IDPs living in appalling conditions,” she said. “The much-needed re-opening of the Kerem Shalom border crossing will barely make a dent in the needs on the ground if more aid is not allowed in. The Secretary-General has warned that the humanitarian system in Gaza is at severe risk of collapse.”

Gaviria Betancur reiterated her concerns that Israel’s actions amount to the war crimes of collective punishment and forcible transfer.

“I call on Israel to immediately end attacks on civilians, cease its campaign to alter the composition of Gaza’s population through mass forced displacement, implement a permanent ceasefire, allow for the unrestricted passage of humanitarian aid, and prioritise dialogue to secure the safe release of remaining hostages,” the Special Rapporteur said.

XXVI. Secretary-General appoints Sigrid Kaag as Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza

On 26 December, Secretary-General António Guterres announced the appointment of Sigrid Kaag of the Netherlands as Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2720 (2023). The full text of the [press release](#) is replicated below.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today announced the appointment of Ms. Sigrid Kaag of the Netherlands as Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2720 (2023). In this role, she will facilitate, coordinate, monitor, and verify humanitarian relief consignments to Gaza. She will also establish a United Nations mechanism to accelerate humanitarian relief consignments to Gaza through States which are not party to the conflict. In executing these functions, she will be supported by the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS). Ms. Kaag is expected to begin her assignment on 8 January 2024.

Ms. Kaag brings a wealth of experience in political, humanitarian and development affairs, as well as in diplomacy. Most recently, she served as the first Deputy Prime Minister and first female Minister of Finance in the Dutch government since January 2022. Prior to this, she was Dutch Minister for Trade and Development Cooperation from October 2017 until May 2021, and Minister for Foreign Affairs until September 2021. Sigrid Kaag was elected party leader of the social liberal party D66 in September 2020 and she stepped down from that position in August 2023. She led her party to victory in the elections of March 2021.

Ms. Kaag has held a wide range of senior positions in the United Nations system. From 2015 to 2017, she was the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, and from 2013 to 2015, she was Special Coordinator of the Joint Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations Mission

in Syria. She served as Assistant Secretary-General with the United Nations Development Programme from 2010 to 2013 and as Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Jordan from 2007 to 2010. Prior to that, Ms. Kaag served in several senior positions with UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

Ms. Kaag holds a Master of Arts [sic] in Middle East Studies from the University of Exeter, a Master of Philosophy in International Relations from Oxford University and a Bachelor of Arts in Middle East Studies from the American University in Cairo. She speaks Dutch, German, French, English, Spanish and Arabic.

XXVII. UN Human Rights Office warns of rapidly deteriorating human rights situation in the West Bank, calls for end to violence

On 28 December, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published a Flash report on the human rights situation in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The [summary](#) of the report is replicated below.

Summary of the Report

1. From January to October 2023 had already seen the highest levels of violence from Israeli Security Forces (ISF) and Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since United Nations records began in 2005. This was against a backdrop of ever-growing settler population and increasing risks of annexation of parts of the occupied West Bank and of forcible transfer Palestinians out of their homes, especially in Area C.

2. The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has nevertheless further deteriorated rapidly since the 7th of October, when Al Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, and other Palestinian armed groups, as well as armed and unarmed Palestinian civilians, attacked civilians and civilian objects as well as military objectives in southern Israel. Since 7 October and as of 20 November, ISF and Israeli settlers have killed 209 Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. This followed, notably, an increase in the use of military tactics and weapons in law enforcement contexts, the use of unnecessary or disproportionate – and therefore unlawful – force to suppress Palestinian protests and to enforce broad movement restrictions imposed on discriminatory grounds. Mass arbitrary detentions and consequential unlawful detentions and reported torture and other ill-treatment of Palestinians by IF raised concerns of collective punishment and deepened the crisis. The number of attacks by settlers exponentially increased, leading to further displacement of Palestinian communities, including of Palestinians out of Area C of the West Bank.

3. ISF have claimed that their actions in the West Bank are preemptive and thus not responding to an actual deterioration in the security situation in the West Bank. Further, the scale of violations and the rhetoric of retaliation by Israeli officials, are exacerbating tensions and creating conditions to ignite an already volatile situation. Palestinians live in constant terror of the discriminatory use of State force and settler violence against them and, while the situation is already dire, all indications are that it may further deteriorate unless urgent measures are taken by Israel to comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law and ensure the rights of protected persons.

4. For decades, as recorded in reports prepared by OHCHR, ISF have used unnecessary and disproportionate force with impunity in the occupied West Bank, while it facilitated the transfer of its own citizens into unlawful settlements.⁴ At the same time, Israel has failed to protect Palestinians from settler violence, and affected Palestinians have been gradually forced out of their homes. However, the coercive

environment has escalated in the last months, making an already oppressive situation worse for Palestinians, and risking a further escalation. In many parts of the occupied West Bank, shops are shut, streets are deserted, and communities cut off, closing down businesses and starving parts of the region of economic activity.

5. Findings in this report are based on human rights monitoring undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in accordance with its standard methodology on human rights monitoring, which involves the gathering and corroboration of information from multiple independent sources in order to establish the facts and analyze violations.

6. Incidents that are included are emblematic of patterns of wider violations of the human rights of protected persons.

XXVIII. Number of children killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, reaches unprecedented levels

On 28 December, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa Adele Khodr issued the [statement](#) replicated below.

This year has been the deadliest year on record for children in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with conflict-related violence reaching unprecedented levels.

83 children have been killed in the past twelve weeks – more than double the number of children killed in all of 2022, amid increased military and law enforcement operations. More than 576 have been injured and others have reportedly been detained. Furthermore, the West Bank has been heavily affected by movement and access restrictions.

As the world watches on in horror at the situation in the Gaza Strip, children in the West Bank are experiencing a nightmare of their own. Living with a near-constant feeling of fear and grief is, sadly, all-too-common for children affected. Many children report that fear has become a part of their daily life, with many scared even walking to school or playing outside due to the threat of shootings and other conflict-related violence. UNICEF is extremely concerned about the right of children in the West Bank including East Jerusalem to safety and protection, and their inherent right to life.

Children living in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have been experiencing grinding violence for many years, yet the intensity of that violence has dramatically increased since the horrific attacks of 7 October. Conflict-related violence has killed 124 Palestinian children and 6 Israeli children since the start of 2023.

Grave violations against children, in particular killing and maiming, are unacceptable. UNICEF urges all parties to abide by their obligations under international human rights law and to protect children from conflict-related violence and protect their most basic right simply to be alive. Children should never be the target of violence, no matter who or where they are. An end to recurring violence is the best way to ensure children can grow up in peace and safety.

The suffering of children in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, must not fade into the background of the current conflict – it is part of it.

XXIX. South Africa institutes proceedings against Israel under the Genocide Convention at the ICJ

On 29 December, the International Court of Justice issued the following [press release](#).

South Africa today filed an application instituting proceedings against Israel before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, concerning alleged violations by Israel of its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the “Genocide Convention”) in relation to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

According to the Application, “acts and omissions by Israel . . . are genocidal in character, as they are committed with the requisite specific intent . . . to destroy Palestinians in Gaza as a part of the broader Palestinian national, racial and ethnical group” and that “the conduct of Israel — through its State organs, State agents, and other persons and entities acting on its instructions or under its direction, control or influence — in relation to Palestinians in Gaza, is in violation of its obligations under the Genocide Convention”.

The Applicant further states that “Israel, since 7 October 2023 in particular, has failed to prevent genocide and has failed to prosecute the direct and public incitement to genocide” and that “Israel has engaged in, is engaging in and risks further engaging in genocidal acts against the Palestinian people in Gaza”.

South Africa seeks to found the Court’s jurisdiction on Article 36, paragraph 1, of the Statute of the Court and on Article IX of the Genocide Convention, to which both South Africa and Israel are parties.

The Application also contains a Request for the indication of provisional measures, pursuant to Article 41 of the Statute of the Court and Articles 73, 74 and 75 of the Rules of Court. The Applicant requests the Court to indicate provisional measures in order to “protect against further, severe and irreparable harm to the rights of the Palestinian people under the Genocide Convention” and “to ensure Israel’s compliance with its obligations under the Genocide Convention not to engage in genocide, and to prevent and to punish genocide”.

Pursuant to Article 74 of the Rules of Court, “[a] request for the indication of provisional measures shall have priority over all other cases”.

The [Application](#) instituting proceedings, which includes the Request for the indication of provisional measures, is available on the Court’s website.