

**United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People**

NGO Action News

21 December 2023

Middle East

- On 19 December, [Al-Haq](#) published an article expressing concern over Israeli plans to pump seawater into tunnels under Gaza, noting that this “weaponization of water” could render the territory uninhabitable and destroy cultural heritage sites.
- On 19 December, [7amleh - The Arab Center for the Development of Social Media](#) published a report titled “Israel’s Surveillance Industry and Human Rights: Impact on Palestinians and Worldwide,” which provides an overview of the Israeli surveillance systems industry, its impact on the human rights of Palestinians, and its implications worldwide.
- On 18 December, [Peace Now](#) published an article noting an unprecedented advancement of settlements in East Jerusalem amidst the war in Gaza. The article suggests these actions are unfolding deliberately as global attention is primarily focused on the war in Gaza.
- On 17 December, the [Palestinian Centre for Human Rights](#), [Al Mezan Center for Human Rights](#), and other human rights organizations issued a joint press release expressing concern that civilians were trapped under the rubble in Gaza, while medical and rescue teams were being denied access to areas where the Israeli occupying forces were deployed.
- On 17 December, [Al Shabaka](#) published an interview titled “Palestine Solidarity Crackdown: Challenges in the US and Europe,” with Layla Kattermann of the European Legal Support Center and Diala Shamas of the Center for Constitutional Rights.
- On 14 December, [Defence for Children International- Palestine](#) published its year-in-review report, titled “Israeli forces carry out genocide against Palestinian children.” The report states that at least 7,870 Palestinian children have been killed in Gaza since 7 October 2023, with thousands more reported missing under the rubble, most of whom are presumed dead.

Asia and Europe

- On 20 December, [Amnesty International](#) called for an urgent investigation into the inhumane treatment and enforced disappearance of Palestinian detainees from Gaza. Its concerns were heightened by recent images of dozens of Palestinian men being detained without clothing in Beit Lahia, northern Gaza.

- On 15 December, [Association France Palestine Solidarité](#) issued a press release (in French) denouncing the fact that some 4,185 French nationals were serving in the Israeli army committing war crimes in Gaza. The press release called for French nationals (including dual nationals) implicated in war crimes to be brought before the French justice system.
- On 12 December, the [Palestinian Return Centre](#) held a panel discussion as part of its annual “Return Week,” which is an annual commemoration to mark the anniversary of UN Resolution 194 which grants Palestinian refugees the right of return. Panelists included academics, activists and experts based in England, Canada, and Ireland.

North America

- On 4 January 2024, [The People’s Forum](#) will hold an event titled “Collective Struggle of Bangladesh and Palestine: Past, Present, Future,” which will examine the intertwined histories of Bangladeshi and Palestinian resistance.
- On 20 December, [Human Rights Watch](#) and other civil society organizations wrote a letter to US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin III requesting urgent steps be taken to protect civilians in Gaza, urging him to refrain from transferring explosive weapons for use in Gaza and to withhold US assistance that would facilitate violations of international humanitarian law.
- On 19 December, [The Brookings Institution](#) held a virtual event titled “Global actors in the war in Israel and Gaza” with experts on the foreign policies of key global actors to analyze the international aspects of the Middle East crisis.
- On 18 December, [Jewish Voice for Peace](#) reported that on 14 December, the eighth night of Hanukkah, its members had shut down eight bridges and highways in eight cities across the US to demand “an end to the genocide of Palestinians.” The activists carried giant menorahs and blocked traffic for several hours, carrying signs with messages such as “Let Gaza live.”

United Nations

- On 19 December, [Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process](#) Tor Wennesland, gave a briefing to the Security Council, expressing concern over the deteriorating situation in Gaza on all fronts. He also expressed concern over the wider impacts of the war and the risk for escalation in the region.
- On 19 December, the [General Assembly](#) took up the report 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” (document [A/78/467](#)), and adopted the related resolution.
- On 19 December, [UNICEF](#) Spokesperson James Elder gave a press briefing and noted that the Gaza Strip is the most dangerous place in the world to be a child. He also expressed

concern that so-called “safe zones” in Gaza were anything but safe as there is a lack of water, sanitation, food and protection.

- On 17 December, [WHO](#) issued a press release on the joint mission to Al-Shifa Hospital in north Gaza it undertook with OCHA, UNDSS, and UNMAS to deliver health supplies and assess the situation in the facility. The team described the emergency department as a “bloodbath”, with new patients arriving every minute.
- On 14 December, a group of Special Rapporteurs, Independent Experts and Working Groups issued a [statement](#) expressing concern with the situation of women and girls in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel, and calling for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza.
- On 14 December, [OHCHR](#) issued a press release expressing alarm over the unprecedented number of journalists and media workers who have been killed in Gaza since 7 October. The press release notes that according to the International Federation of Journalists, 73 per cent of journalists and media workers killed globally so far in 2023 have been in Gaza.
- On 13 December, [UNRWA](#) Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini provided remarks at the Global Refugee Forum. He described the dire situation in Gaza as “a living hell.” He also called for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and an end to the siege in order to provide meaningful humanitarian assistance.

This newsletter informs about recent and upcoming activities of Civil Society Organizations working on the question of Palestine. The Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights of the UN Secretariat provide the information “as is” without warranty of any kind, and do not accept any responsibility or liability for the accuracy, or reliability of the information contained in the websites linked in the newsletter. Translations of the NGO Action News in other languages will be available soon.



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