

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

NGO Action News

11 January 2024

Middle East

- On 8 January, [B'Tselem – The Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories](#) issued the press release “Israel is starving Gaza” to denounce the humanitarian crisis in the Strip, following a recent report of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Famine Review Committee (FRC). B'Tselem explained that the FRC found, in four of five households in northern Gaza and in half of IDP households in the south, residents went days without any food and many skipped meals to feed their children. B'Tselem called on the parties to the conflict to allow rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian aid, including food, as part of their obligations under international humanitarian law.
- On 8 January, [Gisha – Legal Centre for Freedom of Movement](#) provided the update “An impossible Christmas”, denouncing the plight of Christian Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Gisha spoke of the Israeli bombardments targeting churches in Gaza, despite of being afforded special protection as civilian buildings under international law. The NGO reiterated its call for an immediate ceasefire in order to prevent further atrocities and begin to address the humanitarian catastrophe in the Strip.
- On 4 January, [the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights \(PCHR\), Al Mezan and Al-Haq](#) issued a joint statement to “demand an end to the repeated Israeli attacks against internally displaced persons forced to seek shelter in tent camps and in areas designated as ‘safe’ by the Israeli military.” The Palestinian NGOs reiterated their call on the international community to promptly take meaningful and effective actions and measures, ensuring an immediate ceasefire, the delivery of unconditional humanitarian aid to all residents of the Gaza Strip, and the lifting of the 16-year-long illegal closure and blockade of Gaza. They further called on Member States to ensure an end to the Israeli occupation.
- On 4 January, [the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights \(PCHR\), Al Mezan and Al-Haq](#) issued a joint call for an independent investigation amidst ongoing reports of alleged torture, enforced disappearance and deaths of Palestinians in Israeli custody. The NGOs urged the UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment, along with the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, to publicly address these grave violations and initiate a prompt investigation.
- On 4 January, [Peace Now](#) issued the report “Unmatched Surge in Settlement Activity in the West Bank Since the Onset of the Gaza War.” Peace Now denounced the increase in

construction of outposts, roads, fences and roadblocks initiated by settlers in Area C in the West Bank. These obstacles prevent Palestinians from accessing main roads in the West Bank, and barriers are erected along these roads to impede Palestinian movement and presence in various buffer zones.

- On 3 January, [BADIL - Resource Centre for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights](#) issued a call “to all people of conscience and supporters of Palestinian rights” to take action in support to the public hearings of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 11 and 12 January, on the proceedings initiated by South Africa against Israel “concerning alleged violations by Israel of its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in relation to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.” BADIL shared [a template letter](#), urging civil society to send it to UN Permanent Missions in New York and Geneva as well as to Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

Asia and Europe

- On 11 January, the [World Council of Churches \(WCC\)](#) issued a press release calling on “all responsible members of the international community to respect and implement the ICJ rulings.” WCC highlighted “a significant moment for justice and the rule of law” as public hearings commenced in the ICJ on allegations against Israel violations of the Genocide Convention.
- In a press release on 10 January, [Amnesty International](#) welcomes the ICJ hearings over Israel’s alleged breaches of the Genocide Convention as a vital step to help protect Palestinian civilians. It said that pending a final ruling of the Court, an urgent order to implement Provisional Measures would be an important means to help prevent further death, destruction and civilian suffering and provide a warning to other States that they must not contribute to grave violations and crimes against Palestinians.
- On 8 January, the [Palestinian Return Centre \(PRC\)](#) informed that it sent a letter to UK Members of Parliament to vote against the “Economic Activity of Public Bodies Bill”, which is allegedly designed to put a stop to the solidarity actions advanced by the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS). The PRC said that the letter comes at a time when Israel faces charges of genocide at the ICJ, and it is therefore paramount “to protect the right to boycott” and “a peaceful form accountability under international law.”
- On 4 January, [Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights \(LPHR\)](#) issued a legal briefing on the Genocide Convention case brought by South Africa against Israel to the ICJ. LPHR also encouraged the Court to be guided by the spirit of late Judge Antonio Cançado Trindade’s approach in his separate opinion on the “Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v. Myanmar) (2020)” and to place primacy on protecting the extremely vulnerable.

- On 4 January, the [European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine](#) (ECCP) issued an urgent call to support South Africa’s application to the ICJ. It called on all States parties to the Genocide Convention to support the proceeding urgently and fully and in particular, the request for Provisional Measures.

North America

- On 11 January, [Human Rights Watch](#) issued the press release “Israel/Palestine: Unprecedented Killings, Repression; Urgent Action to Prevent Further Mass Atrocities” as part of its release of the “World Report 2024”. Human Rights Watch criticized Israeli authorities for their disproportionate response to the 7 October attacks, and for leading a collective punishment in the Gaza Strip that amount to war crimes and include the use of starvation as a method of warfare. It also denounced an increase of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank throughout 2023, as well as incidents of settler violence against Palestinians and their property.
- On 10 January, the [Institute for Palestine Studies](#) held the webinar “Will South Africa Succeed in Prosecuting Israel for Genocide in Gaza?” featuring international legal experts Omar Nashabe, Paul Morcos and Dana Farraj.
- On 10 January, [the Institute for Middle East Understanding](#) held a Q&A session on South Africa’s case against Israel at the ICJ, with human rights lawyer and political analyst Diana Buttu. The session served to discuss the necessary legal grounds to establish that genocide is taking place and the next step if the ICJ finds that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza.
- On 9 January, [The Jerusalem Fund for Education & Community Development](#) published the article “Exposing the Truth of Israel’s *Less Intense* Genocidal Campaign in Gaza”. The author Jihad Abusalim denounced the death toll in Gaza and a “methodical genocide” by Israel. He called for an urgent ceasefire, not just as a temporary measure, but as a crucial step towards addressing the larger issues at hand, including that accountability for Israel’s actions is non-negotiable.
- On 8 January, [J Street](#) issued the press release “US Should Seek Unequivocal Israeli Commitment, in Word and in Deed, against Mass Transfer of Civilians from Gaza”. The statement welcomed Biden Administration’s clear rejection of calls from the Netanyahu government for the mass resettlement of civilians from the Gaza Strip. J Street said that all appropriate aid and assistance should be provided to those both internally and externally displaced by the war in order to ensure their ability to live safely and freely in Gaza.
- On 8 January, [Americans for Peace Now](#) held the webinar “The Future of Gaza – A Palestinian Perspective with Zaha Hassan” to discuss the future of the Gaza Strip and the position of the Palestinian Authority and the PLO, and how the latter link it to the future of the West Bank and the Palestinian society as a whole.

- On 3 January, [the Centre for Constitutional Rights](#) issued the press release “Civil and Human Rights Organizations, Legal Groups Back Palestinians’ Suit Charging Biden with Complicity in Gaza Genocide.” Civil society groups from around the world submitted briefs in support of the lawsuit brought by Palestinians against President Biden, Secretary of State Blinken, and Secretary of Defense for their failure to prevent – and complicity in – Israel’s alleged genocide in Gaza.

United Nations

- On 11 January, [UN human rights experts](#) welcomed the start of ICJ genocide hearings in The Hague and reiterated their call for a ceasefire. The experts commended South Africa for bringing this case to the ICJ at a time when the rights of Palestinians in Gaza are being violated with impunity. They called on all States to cooperate with Court as it interprets the Genocide Convention and respect the role of the ICJ as an independent court of law. On 10 January, the [Human Rights Council](#) held the elections of its 2024 presidency, a role expected to play a significant part in addressing the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the Gaza Strip.
- On 5 January, [Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths](#) issued the statement “The War in Gaza Must End”. He states that it is time for the parties to meet all their obligations under international law, including to protect civilians and meet their essential needs, and to release all hostages immediately.
- On 3 January, [the International Court of Justice](#) (ICJ) issued a press release informing of public hearings at the Peace Palace in The Hague, in the proceedings instituted by South Africa against Israel on 29 December 2023. The hearings will be devoted to the request for the indication of Provisional Measures “to ensure Israel’s complicate with its obligations under the Genocide Convention not to engage in genocide, and to prevent and to punish genocide.”

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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