



DIVISION FOR  
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

# Bulletin

on action by the United Nations system and  
intergovernmental organizations  
relevant to the question of Palestine

March 2024  
Volume XLVII, Bulletin No. III

## *Contents*

|   |    |
|---|----|
| I. Nicaragua files an ICJ application against Germany under the Genocide Convention.....  | 3  |
| II. Security Council expresses deep concern over humanitarian convoy incident which reportedly killed over 100 in Gaza .....                                      | 3  |
| III. UNICEF warns of child deaths due to malnutrition in Gaza .....   | 4  |
| IV. UN Special Representative finds ‘clear and convincing information’ of the sexual violence committed against Israelis during and after October 7 attacks ..... | 5  |
| V. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights called for ceasefire, accountability for international law violations.....   | 9  |
| VI. South Africa submits an urgent request to the ICJ seeking additional provisional measures.....  | 12 |
| VII. UN Special Coordinator condemns the reported advancement of Israeli settlement plans.....  | 13 |
| VIII. UN Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator and UNOPS welcome opening of the Gaza maritime corridor .....   | 13 |
| IX. UN Palestinian Rights Committee holds a virtual panel discussion on the impact of Gaza war on Palestinian women and children on the sidelines of CSW68.....   | 14 |
| X. Record-breaking donation for UNRWA’s Gaza response from Singapore’s Rahmatan Lil Alamin Foundation .....   | 18 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| XI. China and Russia veto United States’ draft resolution at the Security Council.....  | 19 |
| XII. UN Secretary-General vows solidarity with Palestinians at Rafah border crossing.....   | 23 |
| XIII. UN Special Rapporteur finds that threshold for genocide has been met in Gaza .....  | 24 |
| XIV. Security Council demands an immediate ceasefire during the month of Ramadan in Gaza .....  | 25 |
| XV. UN Special Coordinator presents 29 <sup>th</sup> Quarterly Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of UNSCR 2334 (2016) to the Security Council ..... | 26 |
| XVI. UNFPA warns that the threat of famine is looming over Gaza .....   | 32 |
| XVII. ICJ issues an order in response to South Africa’s request, directs Israel to open land crossings into Gaza .....  | 33 |

*The Bulletin can be found in the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) on the Internet at:*

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## **I. Nicaragua files an ICJ application against Germany under the Genocide Convention**

*On 1 March, Nicaragua filed an [application](#) at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against Germany. The following is an excerpt from the application:*

...

101. On the basis of the facts set forth above, Nicaragua, as a State party to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, to the Four Geneva Conventions of 1949: for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field; for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea; relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War; and relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, as well as their 1966 Protocols and other relevant treaties protecting human rights and concerning international humanitarian law and as a member of the international community of States bound by peremptory norms of international law, Nicaragua respectfully requests the Court, as a matter of extreme urgency, pending the Court's determination of this case on the merits, to indicate the following provisional measures with respect to Germany in its participation in the ongoing plausible genocide and serious breaches of international humanitarian law and other peremptory norms of general international law occurring in the Gaza Strip:

(1) Germany shall immediately suspend its aid to Israel, in particular its military assistance including military equipment, insofar as this aid may be used in the violation of the Genocide Convention, international humanitarian law or other peremptory norms of general international law such as the Palestinian People's right to self-determination and to not be subject to a regime of apartheid; (2) Germany must immediately make every effort to ensure that weapons already delivered to Israel are not used to commit genocide, contribute to acts of genocide or are used in such a way as to violate international humanitarian law; (3) Germany must immediately do everything possible to comply with its obligations under humanitarian law; (4) Germany must reverse its decision to suspend the funding of UNRWA as part of the compliance of its obligations to prevent genocide and acts of genocide and the violation of the humanitarian rights of the Palestinian People which also includes the obligation to do everything possible to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches the Palestinian people, more particularly in Gaza; (5) Germany must cooperate to bring to an end the serious breaches of peremptory norms of international law by ceasing its support, including its supply of military equipment to Israel that may be used to commit serious crimes of international law and that it continue the support of the UNRWA on which this Organizations has counted and based its activities.

102. Pursuant to Article 74 (4) of the Rules of the Court, and in light of the extremely urgent nature of the situation in Gaza, pending the meeting of the Court, Nicaragua respectfully requests the President of the Court to call upon Germany to take all measures necessary, including ceasing all acts that might constitute or facilitate the commission of violations to the Genocide Convention, the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and its Additional Protocol, and other peremptory norms of international law, in order to enable any order the Court may make to have its appropriate effects.

...

## **II. Security Council expresses deep concern over humanitarian convoy incident which reportedly killed over 100 in Gaza**

*On 2 March, the Security Council adopted the following [Press Statement](#):*

The members of the Security Council express deep concern regarding reports stating that over 100 individuals lost their lives with several hundred others sustaining injuries, including people with gunshot wounds as observed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in an incident involving Israeli forces at a large gathering surrounding a humanitarian assistance convoy south-west of Gaza City. The Council members take note that an Israeli investigation is under way.

They extend their sincere condolences to the families of the victims and wish a swift and complete recovery for those who have been injured.

The Council members stress the need to take all necessary measures to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure.

In this regard, they reaffirm that all parties to conflicts must comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as applicable.

They 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.

In this regard, they express grave concern over the estimation from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) that all 2.2 million people in Gaza would face alarming levels of acute food insecurity.

The Council members reiterate their demand for parties to the conflict to allow, facilitate, and enable the immediate, rapid, safe, sustained and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale to the Palestinian civilian population throughout the Gaza Strip and for the full implementation of resolutions 2712 (2023) and 2720 (2023).

The Council members urge Israel to keep border crossings open for humanitarian aid to enter Gaza, to facilitate the opening of additional crossings to meet humanitarian needs at scale, and to support the rapid and safe delivery of relief items to people in all of the Gaza Strip.

### **III. UNICEF warns of child deaths due to malnutrition in Gaza**

*On 3 March, Adele Khodr, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, issued the following [statement](#):*

The child deaths we feared are here, as malnutrition ravages the Gaza Strip.

At least ten children have reportedly died because of dehydration and malnutrition in Kamal Adwan Hospital in the Northern Gaza Strip in recent days. There are likely more children fighting for their lives somewhere in one of Gaza's few remaining hospitals, and likely even more children in the north unable to obtain care at all.

These tragic and horrific deaths are man-made, predictable, and entirely preventable.

The widespread lack of nutritious food, safe water and medical services, a direct consequence of the impediments to access and multiple dangers facing UN humanitarian operations, is impacting children and mothers, hindering their ability to breastfeed their babies, especially in the Northern Gaza Strip. People are hungry, exhausted and traumatized. Many are clinging to life.

The disparity in conditions in the north and south is clear evidence that aid restrictions in the north are costing lives. UNICEF and WFP malnutrition screenings in the north in January found that nearly 16 per cent - or 1 in 6 children under 2 years of age - are acutely malnourished. Similar screenings conducted in the south in Rafah, where aid has been more available, found 5 per cent of children under 2 years are acutely malnourished.

Humanitarian aid agencies like UNICEF must be enabled to reverse the humanitarian crisis, prevent a famine, and save children's lives. For this we need reliable multiple entry points that would allow us to bring aid in from all possible crossings, including to northern Gaza; and security assurances and unimpeded passage to distribute aid, at scale, across Gaza, with no denials, delays and access impediments.

UNICEF has been warning since October that the death toll in Gaza would increase exponentially if a humanitarian crisis emerged and was left to fester. The situation has only gotten worse, and as a result, last week, we warned that an explosion in child deaths was imminent if the burgeoning nutrition crisis wasn't resolved.

Now, the child deaths we feared are here and are likely to rapidly increase unless the war ends and obstacles to humanitarian relief are immediately resolved.

The sense of helplessness and despair among parents and doctors in realizing that lifesaving aid, just a few kilometres away, is being kept out of reach, must be as unbearable, but worse still are the anguished cries of those babies slowly perishing under the world's gaze. The lives of thousands more babies and children depend on urgent action being taken now."

#### **IV. UN Special Representative finds 'clear and convincing information' of the sexual violence committed against Israelis during and after October 7 attacks**

*On 4 March, Special Representative of Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, submitted her [mission report](#) to the Secretary-General. The executive summary of the report is reproduced below:*

##### **Executive Summary**

1. The present report is submitted to the United Nations Secretary-General pursuant to the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC), outlined by the Security Council in resolutions 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2331 (2016), and 2467 (2019). This report contains the findings of the mission of Special Representative, Ms. Pramila Patten to Israel, aimed at gathering, analysing, and verifying information on conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) in the context of the attacks on 7 October 2023 and their aftermath, and for its potential inclusion in reporting to the Security Council, given the absence of relevant United Nations entities operating in Israel. The visit which was carried out at the invitation of the Government of Israel, also included a visit to the occupied West Bank. The report describes findings on incidents and patterns of CRSV (i) during the 7 October attacks; and (ii) in the context of abduction and hostage-taking. It also covers the engagement of

the mission team with the Palestinian Authority and other stakeholders and sets out information it received regarding allegations of CRSV by Israeli security forces in the occupied West Bank.

2. The mission took place from 29 January to 14 February 2024. The mission team was led by the SRSG-SVC who was supported by a technical team composed of nine experts drawn from the United Nations, including staff from the office of the SRSG-SVC and specialists trained in safe and ethical interviewing of survivors/victims and witnesses of sexual violence crimes; a forensic pathologist; and a digital and open-source information analyst. The mission team received the full cooperation of the Government of Israel.

3. In Israel, the mission team conducted a total of 33 meetings with Israeli national institutions, including relevant line ministries such as Foreign Affairs, Welfare and Social Affairs, Health, and Justice, including the State Attorney General's Office, as well as the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), the Israeli Security Agency (Shin Bet), and the Israeli National Police in charge of the investigation into the 7 October attacks (Lahav 433). The SRSG-SVC also met with the President of Israel, Isaac Herzog, and the First Lady. The mission team conducted several visits to the Shura military base, the morgue to which the bodies of victims were transferred, as well as one visit to the Israeli National Center of Forensic Medicine. The mission team reviewed over 5,000 photos and around 50 hours of footage of the attacks, both provided by various state agencies, independent private sources and through an independent online review of various open sources, to identify potential instances and indications of CRSV. Further, the mission team conducted interviews according to UN standards and methodology, with a total of 34 interviewees, including with survivors and witnesses of the 7 October attacks, released hostages, first responders, health and service providers and others. The mission team also met with families and relatives of hostages still held in captivity as well as members of the community displaced from kibbutz Nir Oz. It further met with a range of relevant Israeli civil society organizations and representatives from academia.

4. The mission team visited four locations affected by the 7 October attacks in the Gaza periphery, namely Nahal Oz military base, kibbutz Be'eri, the Nova music festival site, and Road 232 where reports of sexual violence had emerged. For the purpose of the present report, information was also gathered pertaining to incidents of CRSV reportedly committed in kibbutzim Kfar Aza and Re'im, which the mission team did not visit.

5. Information received by the mission team indicates that on the morning of 7 October 2023, at about 6:30 AM and under the cover of an unprecedented barrage of rockets, a coordinated attack by Hamas joined by other armed groups, which reportedly included the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Popular Resistance Committees, other armed elements and armed and unarmed civilians, breached the Gaza perimeter fence at multiple points, entered the Gaza periphery and attacked military and civilian targets, including surrounding villages and towns, music festivals and adjacent roads. The complexity and modus operandi of the attacks, which seem to have occurred over three cumulative waves, appear to demonstrate a significant level of planning, coordination and detailed prior knowledge of the targets selected.

6. The attacks resulted in approximately 1,200 fatalities and thousands of injuries, predominantly among civilians. Based on information reviewed by the team, people were shot, often at close range; burnt alive in their homes as they tried to hide in their safe rooms; gunned down or killed by grenades in bomb shelters where they sought refuge; and hunted down on the Nova music festival site as well as in the fields and roads adjacent to the festival ground. Other violations included sexual violence, abduction of hostages and corpses, the public display of captives, both dead and alive, the mutilation of corpses, including decapitation, and the looting and destruction of civilian property. A total of 253 individuals, including some deceased, were taken as hostages.

7. The national authorities faced numerous challenges in the collection of evidence and pursuit of their investigations of the crimes committed during the 7 October attacks, including challenges of coordination and information sharing between governmental agencies, with very specific challenges related to crimes of sexual violence. These included limited survivor and witness testimony, limited forensic evidence due to the large number of casualties and dispersed crime scenes in a context of persistent hostilities; the loss of potentially valuable evidence due to the interventions of some inadequately trained volunteer first responders; the prioritization of rescue operations and the recovery, identification, and burial of the deceased in accordance with religious practices, over the collection of forensic evidence. Further, a significant number of the recovered bodies had suffered destructive burn damage, which made the identification of potential crimes of sexual violence impossible.

8. The mission team also faced specific challenges in gathering and verifying information on the occurrence of conflict-related sexual violence. The main challenge was the limited number of and access to survivors/victims of sexual violence, and to survivors and witnesses of the 7 October attacks. While the mission team was able to meet with some released hostages as well as with some survivors and witnesses of the attacks, it did not meet with any survivor/victim of sexual violence from 7 October despite concerted efforts encouraging them to come forward. The mission team was made aware of a small number of survivors who are undergoing specialized treatment and still experiencing an overwhelming level of trauma. Further, the internal displacement of several communities from the Gaza periphery to other locations, the relocation of survivors of the Nova music festival attacks both internally and to third countries as well as the deployment of 7 October first responders from the military forces to combat, hindered access to first-hand information.

9. The lack of trust by survivors of the 7 October attacks and families of hostages in national institutions and international organizations, such as the United Nations, as well as the national and international media scrutiny of those who made their accounts public, hindered access to survivors of the attacks, including potential survivors/victims of sexual violence.

10. The absence of comprehensive forensic evidence limited the mission team's ability to draw definitive forensic conclusions in many instances. This was compounded by evidence being spread among various agencies and limited organization of the material, and the fact that the process of linking individuals with specific photos and videos is still ongoing. The inaccurate and unreliable forensic interpretations by some non-professionals also represented a challenge.

11. Lastly, the mission took place over a limited period of two and a half weeks, and, in a context for Israel, where no dedicated UN country team or infrastructure is operational. Considering the scale and magnitude of the attacks, and the range of locations and the high number of casualties, the mission team could not comprehensively cover the full range of the situation.

12. Based on the information gathered by the mission team from multiple and independent sources, there are reasonable grounds to believe that conflict-related sexual violence occurred during the 7 October attacks in multiple locations across Gaza periphery, including rape and gang rape, in at least three locations. Across the various locations of the 7 October attacks, the mission team found that several fully naked or partially naked bodies from the waist down were recovered – mostly women – with hands tied and shot multiple times, often in the head. Although circumstantial, such a pattern of undressing and restraining of victims may be indicative of some forms of sexual violence.

13. At the Nova music festival and its surroundings, there are reasonable grounds to believe that multiple incidents of sexual violence took place with victims being subjected to rape and/or gang rape and then killed or killed while being raped. Credible sources described finding murdered individuals, mostly

women, whose bodies were naked from their waist down – and some totally naked – tied with their hands behind their backs, many of whom were shot in the head. On Road 232, credible information based on witness accounts describe an incident of the rape of two women by armed elements. Other reported instances of rape could not be verified in the time allotted. The mission team also found a pattern of bound naked or partially naked bodies from the waist down, in some cases tied to structures including trees and poles, along Road 232. In kibbutz Re'im, the mission team further verified an incident of the rape of a woman outside of a bomb shelter and heard of other allegations of rape that could not yet be verified.

14. The mission team conducted a visit to kibbutz Be'eri and was able to determine that at least two allegations of sexual violence widely repeated in the media, were unfounded due to either new superseding information or inconsistency in the facts gathered. These included a highly publicized allegation of a pregnant woman whose womb had reportedly been ripped open before being killed, with her foetus stabbed while still inside her. Other allegations, including of objects intentionally inserted into female genital organs, could not be verified by the mission team due in part to limited and low-quality imagery.

15. In kibbutz Kfar Aza, while reports of conflict-related sexual violence, including at least one instance of rape, could not be verified, available circumstantial evidence may be indicative of some forms of sexual violence. In this kibbutz, similarly to other locations, female victims were found fully or partially naked to the waist down with their hands tied behind their backs and shot.

16. In the Nahal Oz military base, the mission team reviewed reports of sexual violence including a case of rape and genital mutilation, neither of which could be verified. With respect to the latter instance, while the forensic analysis reviewed injuries to intimate body parts, no discernible pattern could be identified, against either female or male soldiers. However, seven female soldiers were abducted from this base into Gaza.

17. With respect to hostages, the mission team found clear and convincing information that some have been subjected to various forms of conflict-related sexual violence including rape and sexualized torture and sexualized cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and it also has reasonable grounds to believe that such violence may be ongoing.

18. Regarding the occupied Palestinian Territory, the mission team visited Ramallah in the occupied West Bank to engage with the Palestinian Authority, including the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Detainees and Ex-Detainee Affairs, Women's Affairs, Social Development, and Labor. The mission team also met with the Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights, conducted meetings with several civil society representatives and non-governmental organizations. It also interviewed four recently released detainees. The purpose of the visit to the occupied West Bank was to hear the views and concerns of Palestinian counterparts and engage with them on reports of conflict-related sexual violence received by the mandate, allegedly committed by Israeli security forces and settlers. This information will complement information already verified by other UN entities on allegations of CRSV in Gaza and the occupied West Bank for potential inclusion in the annual Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. Stakeholders raised concerns about cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of Palestinians in detention, including the increased use of various forms of sexual violence, namely invasive body searches; threats of rape; and prolonged forced nudity. The scope of the mission did not encompass a visit to Gaza, where several other UN entities are present and operating, including some that monitor and address sexual violence.

19. The mission was neither intended to, and nor could the mission team, in such a short period of time, establish the prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence during and after the 7 October attacks. The



overall magnitude, scope, and specific attribution of these violations would require a comprehensive investigation by competent bodies.

20. Key recommendations from the visit include: a) to continue to encourage the Government of Israel to grant, without further delay, access to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Israel, to carry-out fully-fledged investigations into all alleged violations; b) to urge Hamas and other armed groups to immediately and unconditionally release all individuals held in captivity and to ensure their protection including from sexual violence; c) to call on all relevant and competent bodies, national and international, to bring all perpetrators, regardless of rank or affiliation, to justice based on individual, superior and command responsibility; d) to encourage the Government of Israel to consider signing a framework of Cooperation with the Office of the SRSB-SVC to strengthen capacity on justice and accountability for CRSV crimes as well as security sector engagement, training, and oversight to prevent and address CRSV; e) to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to monitor and report on incidents, patterns and trends of CRSV in both Israel and the occupied Palestinian Territory through the establishment of the Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements on CRSV (MARA); f) to encourage relevant actors to uphold information integrity and ethical, trauma-informed representations of conflict-related sexual violence, including by respecting and safeguarding the dignity and identity of survivors/victims and witnesses of sexual violence; g) to urge all parties to the conflict to adopt a humanitarian ceasefire, and to ensure that expertise on addressing conflict-related sexual violence informs the design and implementation of all ceasefire and political agreements and that the voices of women and affected communities are heard in all conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes.

## **V. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights called for ceasefire, accountability for international law violations**

*On 4 March, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk submitted the annual report titled “Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice” ([A/HRC/55/28](#)) to the Human Rights Council during its 55<sup>th</sup> session. The key conclusions and recommendations are shared below.*

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

86. The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was already dire prior to 7 October 2023, given a 56-year occupation, a 16-year blockade of Gaza, increasing State and settler-violence against Palestinians in the West Bank, as well as long-standing discriminatory systems of control over Palestinians.

87. The shocking attacks by Palestinian armed groups on 7 and 8 October 2023 and the ensuing massive military response by Israel causing unprecedented destruction and suffering of civilians in Gaza have led to an appalling humanitarian crisis. The means and methods of warfare chosen by Israel have led to massive suffering of Palestinians, including through the killing of civilians on a wide scale, extensive repeated displacement, destruction of homes and the denial of sufficient food and other essentials. Clear violations of international humanitarian law, including possible war crimes, have been committed by all parties. Further investigations would be needed to establish whether other crimes under international law have been committed. There must be accountability – on all sides. The entrenched impunity that OHCHR has reported on for many years cannot persist. Justice is a prerequisite for ending the cycles of violence for Palestinians and Israelis to be able to take meaningful steps towards peace.

88. The High Commissioner calls upon all parties to the conflict to implement a ceasefire on human rights and humanitarian grounds, to ensure full respect for international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and to ensure accountability for violations and abuses.

89. The High Commissioner in particular calls upon the Palestinian armed groups in Gaza:

(a) To repress and punish all violations of international law, including international humanitarian law, committed by their members on and since 7 October 2023;

(b) To ensure the humane treatment and immediate release of all hostages, and to cease firing indiscriminate projectiles and co-location of military objectives and civilians with intent to prevent targeting of military objectives.

90. The High Commissioner in particular calls upon Israel:

(a) To immediately end all practices of collective punishment, including lifting its blockade and closures – and the “complete siege” – of Gaza, and urgently ensure immediate access to humanitarian and commercial goods throughout Gaza, commensurate with the immense humanitarian needs;

(b) To ensure that Israeli security forces immediately take steps to comply with international humanitarian law in the conduct of hostilities, including through the application of targeting rules and policies that fully comply with the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution in attack, cessation of the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas, and protection for hospitals and other civilian infrastructure essential for the survival of the civilian population;

(c) To repress and punish all violations of international law, including international humanitarian law, ensure prompt, thorough, independent, impartial and effective investigations into all incidents carried out by Israeli forces that have led to serious violations of international law, including after 7 October 2023, and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable and that victims are provided with redress;

(d) To ensure that all Palestinians forcibly displaced from Gaza are allowed to return to their homes by creating safe conditions and fulfil its responsibilities as an occupying Power in this regard;

(e) To ensure that the rules of engagement of its security forces and their application are fully consistent with international human rights law, including use of firearms in law enforcement activities only in cases of imminent threat of death or serious injury as a measure of last resort, and plan and implement law enforcement operations to minimize the threat to life and serious injury of the protected population;

(f) To conduct prompt, thorough, independent, impartial and effective investigations into all incidents of use of force by Israeli security forces in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, that have led to the death or injury of Palestinians and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable and victims provided with redress;

(g) To immediately end administrative detention and other forms of detention that amount to arbitrary detention and ensure that all detainees are released unless promptly charged and fairly tried applying non-discriminatory laws; and ensure that detention conditions strictly conform with international norms and standards and end all practices that may amount to torture or other ill-treatment;

(h) To urgently revoke the designations of Palestinian human rights and humanitarian organizations as “terrorist” or “unlawful” organizations;

(i) To end the 56-year occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as part of a broader process towards achieving equality, justice, democracy, non-discrimination and the fulfilment of all human rights for all Palestinians.

91. The High Commissioner also calls upon Palestinian authorities to protect the rights of all Palestinians without discrimination, including discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation or gender identity, and address effectively all cases of gender-based violence.

92. The High Commissioner calls upon all duty bearers:

(a) To immediately end all practices that may amount to torture or ill-treatment, including sexual violence;

(b) To take immediate steps to prevent, or otherwise repress and punish, hate speech and all incitement to hatred and violence;

(c) To put an end to impunity and conduct prompt, independent, impartial, thorough, effective and transparent investigations into all alleged violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed on 7 October 2023 and subsequently, including into allegations of crimes under international law; ensure cooperation with international and transnational mechanisms for accountability, including the International Criminal Court; and ensure that all victims and their families have access to effective remedies, gender-responsive reparation and truth, as well as psychological support to victims of sexual violence;

(d) To take measures to prevent and redress all forms of gender-based violence, including in the domestic sphere, and ensure that the perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence are prosecuted and appropriately sentenced;

(e) To ensure that the rights to freedom of expression and association are respected and protected and that civil society actors, including women human rights defenders, can conduct their legitimate activities safely, freely and without harassment.

93. The High Commissioner calls upon all States and international organizations:

(a) To exert their influence to stop violations of international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict and prevent their further commission, and not to enable such violations;

(b) To support and ensure sufficient funding for civil society to enable it to respond to the grave humanitarian and human rights situation;

(c) To encourage Israel to cooperate with OHCHR and to issue visas to its international staff, ensuring OHCHR has access throughout Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory to monitor and document all violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law.

## VI. South Africa submits an urgent request to the ICJ seeking additional provisional measures

*On 6 March, South Africa filed an urgent [request](#) with the International Court of Justice seeking the modification of the Court's prior provisional measures [order](#) of 26 January 2024. An excerpt from the request is presented below.*

...

1. The Republic of South Africa ('South Africa') is compelled to return to the Court in light of the new facts and changes in the situation in Gaza — particularly the situation of widespread starvation — brought about by the continuing egregious breaches of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide ('Genocide Convention') by the State of Israel ('Israel') and its ongoing manifest violations of the provisional measures indicated by this Court on 26 January 2024 (the 'Order').

...

17. South Africa requests the indication, clarification and/or modification of the following provisional measures:

1. All participants in the conflict must ensure that all fighting and hostilities come to an immediate halt, and that all hostages and detainees are released immediately.

2. All Parties to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide must, forthwith, take all measures necessary to comply with all of their obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

3. All Parties to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide must, forthwith, refrain from any action, and in particular any armed action or support thereof, which might prejudice the right of the Palestinians in Gaza to be protected from acts of genocide and related prohibited acts, or any other rights in respect of whatever judgment the Court may render in the case, or which might aggravate or extend the dispute before the Court or make it more difficult to resolve.

4. The State of Israel shall take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address famine and starvation and the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in Gaza, by:

(a) immediately suspending its military operations in Gaza;

(b) lifting its blockade of Gaza;

(c) rescinding all other existing measures and practices that directly or indirectly have the effect of obstructing the access of Palestinians in Gaza to humanitarian assistance and basic services; and

(d) ensuring the provision of adequate and sufficient food, water, fuel, shelter, clothing, hygiene and sanitation requirements, alongside medical assistance, including medical supplies and support.

5. The State of Israel shall submit an open report to the Court on all measures taken to give effect to all provisional measures ordered by the Court to date, within one month as from the date of this Order.

...

## **VII. UN Special Coordinator condemns the reported advancement of Israeli settlement plans**

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

I condemn yesterday's reported advancement by the Israeli authorities of plans for over 3,400 housing units in settlements in the occupied West Bank.

Israel's settlement expansion continues to be a driver of conflict in the occupied West Bank, further entrenching the occupation and undermining the right of Palestinians to self-determination and independent statehood.

I reiterate that all settlements are illegal under international law, and I urge Israeli authorities to cease all settlement activity and refrain from provocative actions.

## **VIII. UN Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator and UNOPS welcome opening of the Gaza maritime corridor**

*On 12 March, Sigrid Kaag, United Nations Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza and Jorge Moreira da Silva, Executive Director of United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) issued the following [joint statement](#):*

We welcome the opening of a maritime corridor to deliver much-needed additional humanitarian assistance by sea and commend the leadership of Cyprus and the support extended by the European Commission, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the United States and others.

For aid delivery at scale there is no meaningful substitute to the many land routes and entry points from Israel into Gaza. The land routes from Egypt, Rafah in particular, and Jordan also remain essential to the overall humanitarian effort. The maritime corridor brings, however, much needed additionality and is part of a sustained humanitarian response to provide aid as effectively as possible through all possible routes.

Safety and security of civilians in Gaza is paramount. Security is also critical to ensure the safety of humanitarian workers and effective delivery of assistance.

A joint UNOPS - UN Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator technical team is currently in Cyprus working with national authorities and partners, pursuant to the new UN Mechanism for Gaza established under Security Council Resolution 2720 (2023).

## **IX. UN Palestinian Rights Committee holds a virtual panel discussion on the impact of Gaza war on Palestinian women and children on the sidelines of CSW68**

On 13 March, the [virtual panel discussion](#) “War on Gaza: Impact on Palestinian Women and Children” 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 event “**War on Gaza: Impact on Palestinian women and children**” was held on the margins of the sixty-eighth Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) and was convened virtually, on 13 March 2024, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP). Member States participated in the two-hour event, which was also livestreamed on UN WebTV. The public had an opportunity to make comments and pose questions to the panellists via email.

**H.E. Mr. Cheikh Niang**, Chair of the Committee and Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations moderated the event, which consisted of an opening session with remarks by the Chair and by **H.E. Ms. Feda Abdelhady**, Deputy Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations. Panellists included **Ms. Heli Uusikyla**, Senior Deputy Director for UNRWA Affairs in Gaza, **Ms. Laila Baker**, UNFPA Regional Director for Arab States, **Dr. Rola El Farra**, a Palestinian-American physician from Gaza and **Ms. Alexandra Saieh**, Head of Humanitarian Policy and Advocacy, Save the Children International.

At the opening, the **Chair** stressed how this annual initiative offered a unique opportunity for Committee Members and Observers and the public at large to assess the impact of Israeli unlawful policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), including East Jerusalem, on the Palestinian people and on women in specific. Since 7 October 2023, Palestinians in Gaza had endured brutal and unprecedented violence and siege, compounded by 16 years of an Israeli blockade, which had turned into a humanitarian catastrophe. Israel’s indiscriminate attacks had killed at least 30,000 Palestinians, including over 9,000 women and more than 11,000 children. Women and girls, children and newborns in Gaza disproportionately bore the burden of the conflict. The deliberate restriction to access to food, water, health care and sanitation as well as the destruction of medical facilities had brought over two million Palestinians in Gaza to the brink of famine, massive displacement and ethnic cleansing.

For the Committee, the horrifying attacks in Israel by Hamas and other groups including the taking of hostages did not justify the actions of Israel in Gaza. The Committee continued to call for an immediate ceasefire, the unconditional release of all hostages and the unhindered access of humanitarian aid. The Chair lamented that the world watched, on live TV, the ongoing Nakba that amounted to “plausible genocide”, as per the International Court of Justice (ICJ) provisional measures order, without taking real action.

**Ambassador Feda Abdelhady** noted that the Committee event was intended to further mobilize international action to address the massive human rights violations being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against Palestinian women and children and ensure accountability. She made reference to the Secretary-General and heads of UN agencies – UNRWA, UNICEF, OCHA among others – who had already declared months earlier that Gaza had become “a graveyard for children”.

The State of Palestine reminded that more children had been killed in Gaza in five months than in all conflicts worldwide in the previous four years. This was also as much a war on children as it was on women. The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, Francesca Albanese, had stated the war was “destroying a population from its roots”. Of the children who survived – and children comprised nearly half of the population of Gaza – thousands had been orphaned; the short and long-term impact on them was immeasurable. Ambassador Abdelhady stressed that

there could be no excuse not to demand an immediate ceasefire to protect human lives and ensure their sustenance and survival.

### **Panel Discussion**

Speaking from Gaza, **Ms. Heli Uusikyla** described the harrowing situation at the UNRWA's logistic base in Rafah where she was based and where thousands of Palestinians lived as displaced persons in makeshift accommodations.

She described an encounter, earlier that day, with Nour, a young Palestinian mother of six children who was unable to feed her family and pleaded for medical assistance, a safe haven, and vaccinations. Nour had relocated several times inside Gaza in search of refuge. Her plight echoed that of most Palestinians in Gaza.

Ms. Uusikyla noted the total collapse of basic protection for civilians: over 31,000, 72 per cent of whom were women and children, had been killed since the start of the conflict. More than one million Palestinians in Gaza were enduring food insecurity. Some 350,000 children under age five and 150,000 pregnant or breastfeeding women were particularly vulnerable to malnutrition. In addition, approximately 350,000 individuals suffering from chronic illnesses lacked access to essential medical care, including those requiring dialysis.

With overcrowded living conditions in UNRWA shelters, lack of or poor hygiene, infections were on the rise. There were neither enough hygiene kits for women nor special supplies for persons with disabilities. Water and sanitation facilities were limited, with shared access for both genders. There was an average of 888 persons per toilet and 5,400 persons per shower, making conditions especially challenging for women. Overcrowding also increased the risk of sexual and domestic violence.

These conditions were devastating for the 625,000 children in Gaza who were left without education as well as for the estimated 17,000 unaccompanied and separated children and the 10,000 who had lost at least one parent. Persons with disabilities lost caregivers and access to rehabilitation centres. Medical personnel and UNRWA doctors had to see an average of 120 patients per day.

In conclusion, Ms. Uusikyla emphasized that only an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire could safeguard civilians and facilitate the swift, unobstructed, and sustainable restoration of basic services and humanitarian aid access. This imperative action must occur without delay.

**Ms. Laila Baker** focused on lack of access to health care and noted specific pre- and post- natal challenges for women and children in Gaza in the very few remaining operating hospitals. As a woman of Palestinian descent dedicated to promoting justice and egalitarian human values, Ms. Baker highlighted her personal challenge when discussing the dire situation in Gaza. She emphasized the epic humanitarian catastrophe unfolding for the 2.2 million Palestinians, who confronted inhumane conditions of hunger and disease at every turn.

She added that acute malnutrition affected over 150,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women who struggled to meet their daily water and calorie needs. Before 7 October, only one per cent of 2-year-old children suffered from malnutrition, but this figure had surged to 15 per cent currently. Hunger posed a deadly threat to the entire population of Gaza, where over half a million people were on the brink of famine. This situation was occurring in a region where famine and malnutrition were previously unheard-of despite enduring a 75-year blockade and 56 years of occupation.

Ms. Baker urged the audience to empathize with the plight of pregnant women and girls in Gaza, where, as of 1 March, only 2 out of 36 hospitals were partially operational and at triple their capacity, facing severe shortages of essential supplies and fuel, with overworked medical staff conducting caesarean operations without anaesthesia. She then prompted the audience to consider the challenges faced by adolescent girls unable to maintain menstrual hygiene due to limited privacy and inadequate toilet and shower facilities, as described by Ms. Uusikyla.

She expressed UNFPA's support and solidarity for UNRWA, which she referred to as a "sister Agency," and which was currently under relentless attack. However, despite inter-agency support it was only the international community that could provide the massive and urgent relief required in Gaza. Additionally, without UNRWA, the UN could not effectively serve the Palestinian people in this crisis or in the long term.

Ms. Baker also presented recommendations to protect women and girls in Gaza. Firstly, she echoed USG Griffiths, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, in calling for an immediate ceasefire. UNFPA urged the international community to fulfil its obligations under international law to protect civilians. Additionally, UNFPA acknowledged the ICJ's provisional measures regarding the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in Gaza, calling for all parties to comply. UNFPA also advocated for support for medical personnel.

Lastly, Ms. Baker emphasized the role of women not as victims, but as agents of change in "humanitarian diplomacy." She highlighted the importance of their active involvement in fostering less polarized and militarized dialogue, aiming for a peaceful and just solution that upholds the Palestinians' inalienable rights.

**Dr. Rola El Farra** recounted the loss of over 150 family members in Gaza since 7 October 2023. Her aim was to shed light on the devastating impact on women and children in her family, offering a perspective "as a physician, woman, mother, and Palestinian". She informed that during the previous week, a group of Palestinians from Gaza shared their testimonies and personal stories about the impact of the Gaza war on them at a meeting with the Secretary-General.

Originally from Khan Younis, South Gaza, her family suffered immense losses, with over 90 women and children among the casualties. Many were widowed or orphaned, falling victim to Israeli airstrikes that wiped out entire multigenerational families. Dr. El Farra shared heartbreaking stories, with a graphic PowerPoint Presentation, (attached) such as that of Tawfiq, a dentist, his pregnant wife Dana, and their daughters Hala and Reem, whose wedding day turned into tragedy. She also recounted the deaths of young children like Sana and the struggles of others, including Iman, a pregnant mother of nine, and Samar, who died from a respiratory infection due to lack of medical care.

These stories highlighted not only the loss of life from Israeli attacks but also the preventable deaths due to untreated medical conditions. The psychological trauma inflicted on survivors is profound, with many living in constant fear and despair. The El Farra family's tragedy reflected that of many in Gaza, where war crimes had left deep scars, both physical and psychological. The long-term effects, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and a halt in education, will continue to haunt generations to come, further exacerbating the region's social and economic challenges.

**Ms. Alexandra Saieh** highlighted the dire situation facing Palestinian children in Gaza and the West Bank. She emphasized that 2023 had been the deadliest year on record for Palestinian children, with over 13,450 children killed and thousands more 'missing' and presumed buried under the rubble, their deaths unmarked, in Gaza alone, and an additional 100 in the West Bank. The use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas by Israel had led to devastating consequences, with at least 10 children per day losing limbs.



Human rights abuses against children, including arbitrary detention and reports of violence and sexual assault, were widespread since 7 October. Moreover, due to a systematic denial of humanitarian access, 1.1 million children in Gaza were at risk of starvation, dehydration, and preventable diseases.

Ms. Saieh highlighted the alarming rates of malnutrition, with 70 per cent of children under 5 in Gaza suffering from diarrhoea, and 3 per cent experiencing severe malnutrition leading to “wasting.” Education had also been severely impacted, with 60 per cent of schools destroyed or damaged, exacerbating the mental health crisis among children. Over half have contemplated suicide, and three out of five engaged in self-harming behaviours.

The Save the Children representative recommended urgent action, including a definitive ceasefire, a global halt on the transfer of weapons, unrestricted access to Gaza, and the resumption of full commercial goods. She also called for increased funding to UNRWA and accountability for all parties involved in the conflict’s grave violations against children, including a call for the Secretary-General to list all the perpetrators of grave violations against children in his Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict.

During the **Q&A session**, the Chair welcomed **H.E. Mr. Mohan Pieris**, Chair of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, and Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka. Mr. Pieris expressed sympathy for the harrowing stories shared during the panel. He thanked the panellists for their testimonies and stressed the imperative of raising awareness about the realities in Gaza. He deplored that the international community was allowing the situation to persist and called for an immediate ceasefire, urging pressure on Israeli authorities.

A question from the audience dwelled on how these testimonies could be used to influence US policies and achieve an immediate ceasefire. **Dr. El Farra** revealed that in the recent meeting, the Secretary-General emphasized that widespread sharing of these stories would be the most effective strategy to ensure understanding and mobilize efforts to end the conflict.

In her closing, **Ambassador Abdelhady** expressed gratitude to the speakers, UN Agencies, the Committee, and the Division for Palestinian Rights. She extended condolences to the victims of the Gaza conflict and emphasized the importance of sharing personal stories to convey the reality on the ground, particularly with the US public and Congress. She stressed that a military solution was not viable and that only by upholding human rights and international law hope could be restored for Palestinians and a just, lasting peaceful solution achieved.

The Chair concluded by conveying his heartfelt condolences to Dr. El Farra for the immense losses suffered by her family and thanked her for sharing such personal stories allowing everyone to better understand the tragic situation affecting the population in Gaza. He reiterated the significance of the panel’s testimonies, underscoring the vital role women play in pursuing a just and peaceful resolution to the Palestinian issue. He reaffirmed the goal of two states, Israel and Palestine, coexisting peacefully with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

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*\*\*\*Note: This Summary attempts to provide an overall picture of the deliberations of the virtual Event. A video of the Event can be found on the webpage of the CEIRPP, [www.un.org/unispal](http://www.un.org/unispal) as well as in its official Facebook page and YouTube account.*

*\*\*\*Note: The views and opinions expressed in this summary are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.*

## **X. Record-breaking donation for UNRWA's Gaza response from Singapore's Rahmatan Lil Alamin Foundation**

*On 21 March, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) issued the following [press release](#):*

As famine looms in Gaza, UNRWA's aid efforts have been boosted by US\$ 4.6 million donated by the people of Singapore thanks to a record-breaking fundraising drive by the country's Rahmatan Lil Alamin Foundation. This is the second tranche of a total US\$ 6 million that RLAf raised in a public campaign spanning mid-October to mid-November 2023.

The Rahmatan Lil Alamin Foundation (RLAF), or Blessings to All Foundation, handed over a cheque to UNRWA after raising the money from individuals, non-governmental organizations, and corporate donors, in a show of widespread support for the people of Gaza.

The campaign was originally meant to last two weeks, but a groundswell of support led the RLAf to extend it.

The RLAf had already sent UNRWA part of the funds that it raised, and Sunday's cheque handover in Amman marked the payment of the second tranche.

"Singaporeans from every background were united in this fundraising effort," said Muhammad Faizal Othman, Chief Executive Officer of the RLAf. "The overwhelming response, totalling a record-breaking US \$6 million for the RLAf, transcends the sum itself. It embodies the collective spirit of Singaporean hearts reaching out to the people of Gaza."

"The RLAf extends its deepest gratitude to UNRWA for their unwavering and often perilous dedication to bringing vital aid to Gaza. Together, through this extraordinary outpouring of humanity, we have proven that gestures of compassion can have a transformative effect. May this serve as a beacon of hope, illuminating a path towards a peaceful brighter future," he said.

The RLAf's previous record-breaking campaign was also conducted with UNRWA, in response to the May 2021 hostilities in Gaza, raising US \$ 3.5 million.

UNRWA Chief of Staff Ben Majekodunmi received the cheque on behalf of the Agency. He hailed UNRWA staff on the ground for working heroically to provide the people of Gaza with food, water, shelter, and other assistance, but highlighted that it is still so far from being enough."

He thanked the people and government of Singapore for their efforts to provide emergency supplies – remarking that this enormously successful people-to-people effort would provide hope and comfort to the people of Gaza during this dark time.

“The kind of moral and financial support that is coming from Singaporeans is really what’s keeping people alive,” he said.

Singapore’s Foreign Minister, Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, and Senior Minister of State, Zaqy Mohamed, also attended the event, along with five members of the country’s parliament.

## **XI. China and Russia veto United States’ draft resolution at the Security Council**

*Below is the [draft resolution](#) (S/2024/239) tabled by the United States at the Security Council 9574<sup>th</sup> meeting on the Middle East situation including the Palestinian question that took place on 22 March. The draft received 11 votes in favour, 3 against (Algeria, China, Russia) and 1 abstention (Guyana). It was not adopted, owing to the negative votes of permanent members of the Council.*

### **United States of America: draft resolution**

*The Security Council,*

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

*Recalling* all of its relevant resolutions on the situation in the Middle East, including 2712 and 2720,

*Condemning* all acts of terrorism, including the Hamas-led attacks of October 7, 2023, as well as its taking and killing of hostages, murder of civilians, and sexual violence including rape, and *condemning* also its use of civilian infrastructure for military purposes and to hold hostages,

*Reaffirming* that all parties to the conflict must comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as applicable, including with regard to the protection of civilians,

*Emphasizing* its grave concern for the safety and well-being of the more than 130 hostages who continue to be held in the Gaza Strip by Hamas and other armed groups, as well as its grave concern for the safety and well-being of the civilian population of Gaza, including the more than 1.5 million civilians now taking refuge in Rafah, as well as the wounded and the sick, women, children, persons with disabilities as well as other civilians in vulnerable situations,

*Emphasizing* its concern that a ground offensive into Rafah would result in further harm to civilians and their further displacement including potentially into neighbouring countries, and would have serious implications for regional peace and security, and would increase the risk of violations of the parties’ obligations under international humanitarian law,

*Noting* its deep concern for the significant number of civilians killed and injured as a result of the fighting since October 7, *stressing* the obligation for the parties to protect civilians in accordance with international humanitarian law, and in this regard emphasizing the urgent need for immediate and meaningful measures to reduce significantly civilian harm from ongoing and future operations, and also to prevent further displacement of civilians in Gaza,

*Noting* also its concern for the extensive damage to civilian infrastructure in Gaza as a result of the fighting since October 7, and *underlining* the obligation for all parties to the conflict to protect civilian objects according to international humanitarian law and the need to also take all appropriate measures to prevent further damage to civilian infrastructure, including medical infrastructure and transports,

*Reaffirming* its call for all parties, in a manner consistent with international humanitarian law, to ensure the provision of goods and services essential for the survival of the civilian population and to allow and facilitate, in a manner consistent with international humanitarian law, rapid and unhindered passage of humanitarian relief to all civilians in need, and *emphasizing* the provision of humanitarian aid should be consistent with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence,

*Noting* its deep concern about the threat of conflict-induced famine and epidemics presently facing the civilian population in Gaza, as well as the number of undernourished people, and also that hunger in Gaza has reached catastrophic levels, and *stressing*, pursuant to Resolution 2417 (2018), that responding effectively to humanitarian needs in armed conflict, including the threat of conflict-induced famine and food insecurity in situations of armed conflict, requires respect for international humanitarian law by all parties to conflict, underlining the parties' obligations related to protecting civilians and civilian objects, meeting the basic needs of the civilian population within their territory or under their effective control, and allowing and facilitating the rapid and unimpeded passage of impartial humanitarian relief to all those in need,

*Taking* note of intensified diplomatic efforts by Egypt and Qatar, aimed at releasing the hostages, increasing the provision and distribution of humanitarian aid, and alleviating the suffering of civilians in Gaza through an agreement for the release of hostages and an immediate ceasefire of roughly six weeks,

*Emphasizing* that such a ceasefire should lay the foundation for a sustainable ceasefire,

*Calling* for upholding unchanged the historic status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem in word and practice, to enable worship in peace, free from violence, threats and provocations,

*Noting* that Hamas and other terrorist and armed extremist groups in Gaza do not stand for the dignity or self-determination of the Palestinian people, and that Hamas has been designated as a terrorist organization by numerous Member States,

*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,

1. *Determines* the imperative of an immediate and sustained ceasefire to protect civilians on all sides, allow for the delivery of essential humanitarian assistance, and alleviate humanitarian suffering, and towards that end *unequivocally supports* ongoing international diplomatic efforts to secure such a ceasefire in connection with the release of all remaining hostages;

2. *Emphasizes* its full support for using the window of opportunity created by any ceasefire to intensify diplomatic and other efforts aimed at creating the conditions for a sustainable cessation of hostilities and lasting peace as called for in Resolution 2720;

3. *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 relief and medical personnel, their assets and infrastructure;

4. *Emphasizes* the urgent need to expand the flow of humanitarian assistance to civilians in the entire Gaza Strip and *reiterates* its demand for the lifting of all barriers to the provision of humanitarian assistance at scale, in line with resolutions 2712 (2023) and 2720 (2023);

5. *Rejects* any forced displacement of the civilian population in Gaza in violation of international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as applicable;

6. *Reiterates* its demand that Hamas and other armed groups immediately grant humanitarian access to all remaining hostages;

7. *Demands* that all parties comply with their obligations under international law in relation to all persons they detain, including applicable obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and respect the dignity and human rights of all individuals detained;

8. *Urges* Member States to intensify their efforts to suppress the financing of terrorism, including by restricting financing of Hamas through applicable national-level authorities, in accordance with international law and consistent with Resolution 2462 (2019);

9. *Reiterates* its demand for all parties to the conflict to allow, facilitate, and enable, in accordance with applicable international humanitarian law, the full, immediate, safe, sustained and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale directly to the Palestinian civilian population throughout the Gaza Strip, including by facilitating the use of all available routes to and throughout the entire Gaza Strip, including border crossings;

10. *Directs* the Secretary-General to provide the Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza (“the Senior Coordinator”), the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (“the Special Coordinator”) and the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator with the personnel, resources, and support necessary and *underscores* its full support for the Senior Coordinator’s endeavours, pursuant to resolution 2720, to expeditiously establish a UN mechanism for expediting, streamlining, and accelerating the process of providing assistance while continuing to help ensure that aid reaches its civilian destination, in coordination with other UN representatives and entities;

11. *Requests* that all UN coordinators align their respective efforts to support the Senior Coordinator and ensure a more coherent, unified, and effective humanitarian effort;

12. *Demands* that the parties to the conflict engage constructively and cooperate with UN efforts on the ground, including but not limited to the Senior Coordinator’s efforts to expand the provision of aid into Gaza, including by ensuring sustainable and unimpeded flow of assistance by all available routes and through all necessary crossing points, including the Karem Abu Salem/Kerem Shalom Border Crossing, and also by cooperating to open additional crossings and a maritime corridor as soon as possible, and *stresses* the importance of respecting and protecting border crossings and other infrastructure used and proposed for use in the delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale;

13. *Stresses also* the importance of the Senior Coordinator leading and coordinating the planning and preparations by the UN for early recovery and reconstruction of Gaza, and in this regard *recognizes* initial steps by the Office of the UN Special Coordinator (UNSCO), in collaboration with the World Bank and the European Union, towards completing a Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment in northern Gaza, and *underscores* the urgency for completing this assessment;

14. *Underscores* that the UN Mechanism for accelerated provision of assistance established pursuant to Resolution 2720 is not a replacement for other preexisting aid efforts, and *directs* the Senior Coordinator ensure that the mechanism help to facilitate an immediate resumption of the provision of commercial goods including materials and equipment, which would complement aid deliveries and are necessary to repair and help ensure the functioning of critical infrastructure, provide essential services, and would lay the foundation for successful future reconstruction Gaza;

15. *Emphasizes* that humanitarian personnel and assets must be respected and protected and *reiterates* its demand that all parties scrupulously comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as applicable, in particular with regard to the protection of civilians and civilian objects, and *deploras* all attacks against civilians and civilian objects, as well as all violence and hostilities against civilians, and all acts of terrorism;

16. *Emphasizes* also that hospitals, other medical facilities, medical personnel, units, and transport must be respected and protected by all parties in accordance with international humanitarian law;

17. *Demands* all parties to the conflict fully respect humanitarian notification and deconfliction mechanisms, and remediate any deficiencies, to help ensure the safety and security of United Nations and associated humanitarian personnel, consistent with international humanitarian law, without prejudice to their freedom of movement and access, enable the immediate, safe, sustained and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale directly to the Palestinian civilian population throughout the Gaza Strip, and also to help facilitate the movement of aid convoys and patients, in particular sick and injured children and their care givers;

18. *Directs* the parties to allow for the necessary equipment be provided to UN personnel and associated agencies, including satellite phones, radio equipment, armoured vehicles, and other items necessary for their safety, contingent on the provision of assurances that such equipment will only be used for humanitarian purposes;

19. *Stresses* the key role of all UN humanitarian agencies in providing life-saving assistance, and in this regard *welcomes* the decision by the Secretary General to both immediately initiate an investigation of allegations that some United Nations and Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) personnel participated in the October 7 attacks, and also appoint an independent Review Group to assess whether UNRWA is doing everything within its power to ensure its neutrality, and *underscores* the vital importance of full cooperation, including the sharing of information, with these investigations;

20. *Rejects* actions that reduce the territory of Gaza, including through the establishment officially or unofficially of so-called buffer zones, as well as the widespread, systematic demolition of civilian infrastructure;

21. *Condemns* calls by government ministers for the resettlement of Gaza and *rejects* any attempt at demographic or territorial change in Gaza;

22. *Emphasizes* the importance of preventing spillover in the region, including along the Blue Line, and, in this regard, *calls on* all parties to exercise maximum restraint;

23. *Reaffirms* its condemnation in the strongest terms of the attacks carried out by the Houthis on vessels in the Red Sea and its demand that they cease immediately, consistent with Resolution 2722 (2024);

24. *Stresses* that lasting peace can only be based on an enduring commitment to mutual recognition, full respect for human rights, and freedom from violence and incitement to violence;

25. *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;

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

## **XII. UN Secretary-General vows solidarity with Palestinians at Rafah border crossing**

*On 23 March, Secretary-General António Guterres made the following [statement](#) during his mission to the Middle East.*

Since every year going back to since I served as High Commissioner for Refugees, I have undertaken a solidarity mission during the holy month of Ramadan to shine a light on Muslim communities in distress.

This Ramadan, I have come to the Rafah crossing to spotlight the hardship and pain of Palestinians in Gaza – and the obstacles to easing their plight.

This morning, I met with injured Palestinian civilians and their families at the General Hospital in Al Arish, and was extremely moved by their stories, experiences and all the hardships they have endured, and by the generosity and solidarity of Egypt and the Egyptian people.

I say again: nothing justifies the horrific attacks by Hamas on October 7th. And nothing justifies the collective punishment of the Palestinian people. Now more than ever, it is time for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. It is time to silence the guns.

Palestinians in Gaza -- children, women, men – remain stuck in a non-stop nightmare.

Communities obliterated. Homes demolished. Entire families and generations wiped out. With hunger and starvation stalking the population.

Ramadan is a time for spreading the values of compassion, community, and peace.

It is monstrous that after so much suffering over so many months, Palestinians in Gaza are marking Ramadan with Israeli bombs still falling, bullets still flying, artillery still pounding, and humanitarian assistance still facing obstacle upon obstacle.

Fasting with you on Ramadan, I am deeply troubled to know so many people in Gaza will not be able to have a proper Iftar.

Here from this crossing, we see the heartbreak and heartlessness of it all. A long line of blocked relief trucks on one side of the gates. The long shadow of starvation on the other. That is more than tragic. It is a moral outrage. Any further onslaught will make everything worse.

Worse for Palestinian civilians. Worse for the hostages. And worse for all people of the region.

All this demonstrates that it's more than time for an immediate ceasefire, I say it again.

It's time for an ironclad commitment by Israel for total, unfettered access for humanitarian goods throughout Gaza.

And in the Ramadan spirit of compassion, it's time for the immediate release of all hostages. I also urge every member of the United Nations to support our life-saving work led by the backbone of all Gaza relief operations, UNRWA.

We look forward to continuing to work with Egypt to streamline the flow of aid, and deeply appreciate the full Egyptian engagement in support of the Gaza people.

And I want Palestinians in Gaza to know: You are not alone.

People around the world are outraged by the horrors we are all witnessing in real time. I carry the voices of the vast majority of the world who have seen enough. Who have had enough. And who still believe that human dignity and decency must define us as a global community.

It's our only hope. It's time to truly flood Gaza with life-saving aid. The choice is clear: either surge or starvation.

Let's choose the side of help – the side of hope – and the right side of history. I will not give up. And all of us must not give up in doing all we can for our common humanity to prevail in Gaza and around the world.

Thank you.

### **XIII. UN Special Rapporteur finds that threshold for genocide has been met in Gaza**

*On 24 March, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Francesca Albanese presented a [report](#) to the Human Rights Council. The summary of the report is reproduced below.*

...

After five months of military operations, Israel has destroyed Gaza. Over 30,000 Palestinians have been killed, including more than 13,000 children. Over 12,000 are presumed dead and 71,000 injured, many with life-changing mutilations. Seventy percent of residential areas have been destroyed. Eighty percent of the whole population has been forcibly displaced. Thousands of families have lost loved ones or have been wiped out. Many could not bury and mourn their relatives, forced instead to leave their bodies decomposing in homes, in the street or under the rubble. Thousands have been detained and systematically subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment. The incalculable collective trauma will be experienced for generations to come.

By analysing the patterns of violence and Israel's policies in its onslaught on Gaza, this report concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the threshold indicating Israel's commission of genocide is met. One of the key findings is that Israel's executive and military leadership and soldiers have



intentionally distorted *jus in bello* principles, subverting their protective functions, in an attempt to legitimize genocidal violence against the Palestinian people.

...

#### **XIV. Security Council demands an immediate ceasefire during the month of Ramadan in Gaza**

*On 25 March, at its 9586<sup>th</sup> meeting the Security Council adopted Resolution 2728 (2024) with 14 members voting in favour, and one (United States) abstaining. The text of the [Resolution 2728 \(2024\)](#) is reproduced below.*

*The Security Council,*

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

*Recalling all of its relevant resolutions on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question,*

*Reiterating its demand that all parties comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and in this regard deploring all attacks against civilians and civilian objects, as well as all violence and hostilities against civilians, and all acts of terrorism, and recalling that the taking of hostages is prohibited under international law,*

*Expressing deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip,*

*Acknowledging the ongoing diplomatic efforts by Egypt, Qatar and the United States, aimed at reaching a cessation of hostilities, releasing the hostages and increasing the provision and distribution of humanitarian aid,*

1. *Demands* an immediate ceasefire for the month of Ramadan respected by all parties leading to a lasting sustainable ceasefire, and also *demands* the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, as well as ensuring humanitarian access to address their medical and other humanitarian needs, and further demands that the parties comply with their obligations under international law in relation to all persons they detain;

2. *Emphasizes* the urgent need to expand the flow of humanitarian assistance to and reinforce the protection of civilians in the entire Gaza Strip and reiterates its demand for the lifting of all barriers to the provision of humanitarian assistance at scale, in line with international humanitarian law as well as resolutions [2712 \(2023\)](#) and [2720 \(2023\)](#);

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

## **XV. UN Special Coordinator presents 29<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of UNSCR 2334 (2016) to the Security Council**

*On 26 March, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland made the following [statement](#) at the Security Council.*

Mr. President,

Members of the Security Council,

Before turning to the report, I wish to acknowledge the important message from this Council in yesterday's passage of resolution 2728 (2024) – we need a ceasefire now; we need the release of all hostages now. The suffering must end.

Mr. President,

This is the twenty-ninth quarterly report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016). It covers the period from 8 December to 18 March.

The resolution calls on Israel to “immediately and completely cease all settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem” and to “fully respect all of its legal obligations in this regard.” Nevertheless, settlement activities have continued and intensified.

In total some 4,780 housing units were advanced or approved in settlements in Area C in the occupied West Bank and in East Jerusalem. Of these, the Higher Planning Committee (HPC) advanced approximately 3,420 housing units in three settlements in the occupied West Bank, including 2,400 in Ma'ale Adumim settlement on 6 March. Another 580 housing units were approved in two plans in Area C in Revava and Mevo'ot Jericho. In occupied East Jerusalem, 700 housing units were advanced and approved in Givat Hashaked settlement. In addition to this, tenders for approximately 430 housing units were announced for settlements in Area C in the West Bank.

Demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned structures continued across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Citing the lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which are almost impossible for Palestinians to obtain, Israeli authorities demolished, seized, or forced people to demolish 300 structures, displacing 314 people, including 137 children. Sixteen structures were donor funded.

In a continuing trend, 35 Palestinians, including 17 children, left their West Bank communities citing violence and harassment by settlers and shrinking grazing land.

Mr. President,

Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) calls for “immediate steps to prevent all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation and destruction.” Unfortunately, the devastating conflict in Gaza has continued, alongside daily violence in the occupied West Bank.

Mr. President,

In Gaza, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health (MOH), from 8 December to 18 March, at least 14,550 Palestinians were killed, including approximately 4,200 women and 6,000 children, and at least

27,800 were injured. This brings the total reported by the MOH, since 7 October, to more than 31,790 Palestinians killed, a majority of whom are reportedly women and children.

According to Israeli sources 134 hostages are still being held captive, of some 250 taken hostage. Israeli sources also report over 1,461 Israelis and foreign nationals killed by Hamas or other Palestinian armed groups, including at least 338 women, 37 children and 633 members of the security forces, since 7 October, inclusive.

Hostilities remained intense across Gaza, with Israel conducting strikes from air, land and sea, resulting in tens of thousands of casualties, massive displacement of civilians and widespread destruction, including of civilian infrastructure. Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups continued to hold civilians hostage, launch attacks at Israeli forces and fire indiscriminate rockets towards Israel.

The Israeli operation in Khan Younis continued, driving tens of thousands more Palestinians to Rafah, including those already displaced multiple times, where airstrikes have intensified amid concerns of a major Israeli military operation. The fighting has seriously impacted the remaining functioning hospitals in Gaza.

The IDF stated that its operations are targeting Hamas fighters and equipment, as well as tunnel networks and other facilities used for military purposes, including in or under civilian infrastructure.

Law and order are rapidly breaking down in Gaza as desperation grows. On 29 February, more than a hundred Palestinians were killed, and several hundred more injured, in an attack involving Israeli forces during an Israeli-coordinated aid delivery operation in northern Gaza. At least 26 attacks have occurred on people at aid distribution points since mid-January.

Repeated attacks on health-care facilities have been reported in Gaza, resulting in the deaths of health-care workers, patients and internally displaced people sheltering in those locations.

On 15 March, the Prime Minister's Office announced approval of plans for an Israeli military operation in Rafah, including steps to evacuate civilians from combat zones.

In the reporting period, 39 UN personnel were killed in Gaza, bringing the total number of UN staff killed since October 7 to 171.

Meanwhile, violence in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continued at alarming levels.

159 Palestinians, including two women and 43 children, were killed by Israeli security forces (ISF) during search-and-arrest operations, armed exchanges, airstrikes, demonstrations and other incidents. One Palestinian was killed by Israeli settlers, and another was killed either by Israeli forces or by settlers. A total of 1,150 Palestinians were injured, including 240 by tear gas inhalation and 394 by live ammunition.

According to Israeli sources, ten Israelis, including two women, one child and three security forces personnel, were killed and another 74 were injured by Palestinians in shooting, stabbing and ramming attacks and in rock- and Molotov cocktail-throwing and other incidents.

Israeli security forces carried out 1,937 search-and-arrest operations in the occupied West Bank, resulting in 2,119 Palestinians detained including at least 72 children. Israel currently holds at least 3,558 Palestinians in administrative detention.

The high number of fatal incidents during the reporting period precludes me from detailing all but allow me to highlight a few.

Most Palestinians were killed by ISF in the context of Israeli operations in Area A, including during subsequent exchanges with armed Palestinians, marked by the use of increasingly lethal weaponry. Incidents include six Palestinians, including a 14-year-old, killed on 8 December, in al-Far'a refugee camp in Tubas; 11 more, including three children, killed during a three-day Israeli operation and ensuing armed clashes from 12 to 14 December in Jenin; and four Palestinians, including two children, were killed in Tulkarem refugee camp, with five others killed in Nablus' Balata refugee camp on 17 January. On 30 January, inside a hospital in Jenin, ISF killed three Palestinians, one of whom was a patient. The IDF said that the three were planning an attack against Israelis. On 4 March, a 16-year-old was killed in the al Am'ari refugee camp in the largest Israeli operation in and around Ramallah for years.

Settler-related violence continued, including several attacks recorded in the Jordan Valley, where herding communities are at risk of displacement. On 28 February, Israeli authorities extended the administrative detention of a prominent settler by three months.

Violence against Israelis by Palestinians also continued in shooting attacks in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem and in Israel. Three Israelis were killed near Ashdod on 16 February; another was killed on 22 February, near the Ma'ale Adumim settlement in a shooting attack on cars; and, on 29 February, two others, including a 16-year-old, were killed near the Eli settlement.

Despite some restrictions, on 15 March, thousands of Muslim worshipers participated in Friday Ramadan prayers in Jerusalem's Old City, with minimal confrontations.

Mr. President,

Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) calls for the parties to refrain from acts of provocation, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric. Nevertheless, such acts continued.

Marking 100 days since its 7 October attack, a senior Hamas official celebrated and vowed to repeat the event, calling it "a scaled-down model of the final war of liberation." Ahead of the start of Ramadan, Hamas also called on Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, to escalate confrontations with Israel.

A number of Israeli officials called for the "voluntary migration" of Palestinians from Gaza and the reestablishment of settlements there, with a minister posting on social media that Israel "should compel them until they say they want it. Continue to pressure them, using force, starvation, [and] difficult conditions." An Israeli Member of Knesset called on Israel "To occupy, to annex, to destroy all the houses [in Gaza], to build large and spacious neighbourhoods, large settlements."

Mr. President,

Resolution 2334 (2016) reiterated calls by the Middle East Quartet for "affirmative steps to be taken immediately to reverse negative trends on the ground that are imperilling the two-State solution." Negative trends continued.

In Gaza, the humanitarian impact of the hostilities has been cataclysmic and is worsening daily.

Nearly 1.7 million people have been [\*displaced\*](#), with almost 1 million sheltering in Rafah.

More than one million people in Gaza are projected to face catastrophic levels of food insecurity by the end of May, and famine in the northern part of Gaza is imminent according to the latest IPC analysis. Indeed, starvation-related fatalities have already been reported. Most people have no access to adequate food, clean drinking water, or effective sanitation services, amid a decimated health system.

The levels of humanitarian access and safety of humanitarian workers remain alarming, negatively impacting the humanitarian response, alongside operational constraints and pipeline limitations. Near daily Israeli denials and delays of coordinated movement including detentions of humanitarian workers and ineffective deconfliction mechanisms and the lack of approval for adequate communications equipment and armoured vehicles make humanitarian work extremely dangerous. Aid convoys continue to face attacks, damaged roads and unruly mobs, amid a security vacuum.

Some progress was made on a maritime corridor from Cyprus, with a first shipment arriving on 15 March, alongside the opening of an access point in the north of Gaza.

On 29 December 2023, the Republic of South Africa instituted proceedings against Israel before the International Court of Justice concerning alleged violations in the Gaza Strip of Israel's obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. On 26 January, the ICJ indicated provisional measures in the case.

On 29 January, Palestinian Prime Minister Shtayyeh announced a Government reform program centered on improving accountability, reducing deficits, enhancing revenue and upgrading services. Following Prime Minister Shtayyeh's resignation, President Abbas announced Mohammad Mustafa Prime Minister-designate on 14 March.

On 29 February, per an arrangement agreed to between Norway, Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA), the PA started to receive the clearance revenues that Israel collects on its behalf. The revenues exclude an amount Israel says the PA transfers to Gaza, which the parties agreed would be held in a trust fund in Norway. The fiscal situation of the PA nevertheless remains extremely precarious with soaring unemployment and poverty rates, in the context of increased movement restrictions.

Intra-Palestinian discussions took place in Moscow on 1-2 March.

During the reporting period, Israel provided information alleging 12 UNRWA staff were involved in the 7 October attacks. The employment contracts of the active staff members were terminated and the Secretary-General immediately activated an internal investigation, which has delivered an interim report. He also appointed an independent review group, which visited Israel and Palestine in March, to assess whether the Agency is doing everything within its power to ensure neutrality and to respond to allegations of serious breaches.

Mr. President,

In resolution 2334 (2016), the Security Council called upon all States "to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967."

On 7 March, the Norwegian Government issued a statement outlining that "Norwegian businesses should be aware that, through economic or financial activity in the Israeli settlements that violate international law, they risk contributing to violations of international humanitarian law or human rights."

Resolution 2334 (2016) also called upon “all parties to continue, *inter alia*, to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations.”

In the context of the current hostilities in Gaza, intense negotiations between international mediators and the parties continued to formulate a deal for the release of the hostages and a ceasefire.

On 1 February, the U.S. issued an Executive Order imposing sanctions on “persons undermining peace, security and stability in the West Bank.” Additional sanctions on two outposts and settlers were announced on 14 March. In total, seven Israeli settlers have been sanctioned under the order. The UK, France and New Zealand also subsequently announced sanctions against settlers.

On 23 February, reverting to U.S. policy announced in December 2016, the U.S. Secretary of State stated that the U.S. views Israeli settlements as “inconsistent with international law.”

On 4 March, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict released findings that there are reasonable grounds to believe that conflict-related sexual violence occurred in multiple locations during the 7 October attacks in Israel and that there was clear and convincing information that sexual violence has been committed against hostages and reasonable grounds to believe that such violence may be ongoing against those still in captivity. While the scope of the visit in the occupied West Bank did not include verification, the Special Representative stated that she received information about various forms of sexual violence as well as sexual harassment and threats of rape against Palestinian men and women in detention settings, during house raids, and at checkpoints in the West Bank.

Mr. President,

In closing, allow me to share the Secretary-General’s observations on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016).

1. I once again condemn the horrific armed attacks by Hamas and other groups on 7 October. Nothing can justify these acts of terror. The remaining hostages must be released immediately and unconditionally. While in captivity, hostages must be treated humanely and allowed to receive visits and assistance from the Red Cross. I am horrified by the findings of SRSG Patten regarding the use of sexual violence during the 7 October attacks and sexual violence committed against hostages, which may well be ongoing. All perpetrators of such acts must be fully prosecuted and held to account. As hostilities continue, I reiterate that there is no justification for the acts of terror that were committed and the deliberate killing, maiming and abduction of civilians and other protected persons and using sexual violence against them. The use of human shields, and the firing of indiscriminate rockets towards Israeli population centres are violations of international humanitarian law and must cease completely.

2. I am appalled by the immense scale of death, destruction, and human suffering wrought by Israel’s military campaign in Gaza, with civilian killings at a rate that is unprecedented. I condemn the killing of the thousands of civilians in Gaza, a majority of whom are reportedly women, children, and protected personnel.

3. Nothing can justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people. I am concerned over what may be violations of international humanitarian law, including possible non-compliance with the requirements of distinction, proportionality, and precautions in attack. I reiterate that ordering the massive displacement of the population in Gaza without ensuring that basic humanitarian needs can be met raises serious concerns about compliance with the applicable legal requirements. The entry of humanitarian supplies has been far below what is required. Hospitals must be respected and protected by all parties and

should never become battlegrounds. International humanitarian law cannot be applied selectively. It applies to all parties to a conflict at all times and the obligation to comply with it does not depend on reciprocity. I mourn the UN staff killed in Gaza. Their courage and dedication will not be forgotten. The inviolability of United Nations premises must be respected at all times.

4. The life-threatening conditions facing the more than 1.7 million internally displaced persons within an ever-diminishing space in Gaza must be addressed immediately. I am extremely concerned by the possible nightmare of more than 1 million people being displaced again if Israel proceeds with its planned ground operation in Rafah. The world's leading experts on food insecurity also clearly document that famine in the northern part of Gaza is imminent. Palestinians in Gaza are enduring horrifying levels of hunger and suffering. I call on Israel to fulfil its obligations under international law, including allowing and facilitating the rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access into and throughout Gaza. The UN and humanitarian partners must be able to deliver assistance safely. This means that humanitarian locations, movements, and workers must be protected more effectively, and that the UN be allowed the equipment it needs to increase staff safety.

5. I welcome the opening of a maritime corridor to deliver much-needed additional humanitarian assistance by sea, but reiterate that for aid delivery at scale there is no meaningful substitute to delivery by land.

6. I reiterate my call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and urge all sides to redouble efforts to reach an agreement that will bring about a needed humanitarian ceasefire and the release of all hostages. I am engaged tirelessly with all stakeholders towards these objectives and stand ready to support the implementation of an agreement. I welcome the efforts, including by Egypt, Qatar, and the United States, to reach a deal.

7. I am deeply concerned by continued high levels of violence and casualties in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Israel. Intensive Israeli security operations and heavy exchanges with armed Palestinians are leading to rising levels of casualties and decimating many West Bank refugee camps. Security forces must exercise maximum restraint and use lethal force only when it is strictly unavoidable to protect life. I call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law, including with regard to the proportional use of force, and ensure thorough, independent and prompt investigations into all instances of possible excessive use of force, holding those responsible to account.

8. I am alarmed by attacks carried out by Israeli settlers against Palestinians, including in the proximity of Israeli Security Forces. I urge Israel, as the Occupying Power, to take immediate steps to abide by its obligations under international law to protect the Palestinian population against all acts or threats of violence. I note the measures announced by several Council members and other States against extremist settlers. Attacks by Palestinians against Israelis must also cease. All perpetrators must be held accountable.

9. In the spirit of this Holy month of Ramadan, I reiterate the utmost need to uphold the status quo at the Holy Sites in Jerusalem, taking into account the special and historic role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan as custodian of the Holy Sites in Jerusalem. I note that prayers at the Holy Sites have proceeded with some minimal confrontations thus far, and welcome all efforts to preserve calm. All sides must refrain from unilateral steps that would escalate tensions during this sensitive time.

10. I remain deeply troubled by the relentless expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The ever-expanding settlement footprint, including outposts, further entrenches the occupation, while severely impeding the exercise by the Palestinian people of its right to

self-determination. I reiterate that all Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have no legal validity and are in flagrant violation of international law.

11. The demolition and seizure of Palestinian structures, including internationally funded humanitarian projects, entail numerous human rights violations and raise concerns about the risk of forcible transfer. I call upon the Government of Israel to end this practice, in line with its international obligations, and to allow Palestinian communities to build and address their development needs.

12. I am disturbed by the multiple instances in which officials have engaged in dangerous provocations, incitement and inflammatory language, which must be rejected by all.

13. I am encouraged by steps taken by the Palestinian Authority demonstrating its readiness to reform and welcome the implementation of the arrangement facilitated by Norway and agreed to by Israel and the PA that enables revenue transfer to the PA. However, the Palestinian economic and fiscal situation remains in crisis, putting the PA at existential risk. I urge the international community to extend immediate fiscal relief to the PA and for the PA to continue carrying out crucial reforms.

14. I was appalled by the allegations that 12 UNRWA staff were involved in the 7 October attacks. These are being thoroughly and independently investigated, while a review on UNRWA's neutrality is also ongoing. I underscore that UNRWA remains the backbone of the UN humanitarian response in Gaza. The Agency remains indispensable and irreplaceable, a lifeline for millions of Palestine refugees, and critical for regional stability. I welcome the resumption of funding by some donors and continue to call on donors to resume funding, as the continuity of UNRWA operations must be guaranteed.

15. The enormity of the humanitarian, security, and political challenges we are faced with requires a collective, creative, and immediate response. We must urgently address the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza. I regret that, despite intensive diplomatic efforts, we have not seen an agreement on a ceasefire and the release of hostages.

16. It is also important to support efforts to strengthen the PA to enable it to effectively govern across the whole of the OPT. Ultimately, any sustainable solution for Gaza and the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict is political. It is imperative to set the conditions for an agreed political framework that outlines tangible, irreversible steps towards ending the occupation and establishing a two-State solution – Israel and Palestine, of which Gaza is an integral part, living side-by-side in peace and security, on the basis of United Nations resolutions, previous agreements, and international law, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States.

Thank you.

## **XVI. UNFPA warns that the threat of famine is looming over Gaza**

*On 27 March, Natalia Kanem, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), issued the following [statement](#):*

The threat of famine is looming over Gaza.



Hunger and malnutrition, driven wholly by manmade causes and by a lack of humanitarian access, have spread through Gaza at frightening speed, causing catastrophic rates of disease, death and despair. For pregnant women and newborns every day has become a fight for survival.

With each meal missed, the odds of a woman delivering an undernourished, undersized baby rise. New mothers are not getting enough food to nurse their newborns - who are often too weak to even cry. In Gaza, doctors report that newborns are dying because they weigh too little.

Life-threatening obstetric complications and premature births have soared since the outbreak of hostilities. The health system has been decimated: Only three maternity hospitals remain; every functioning medical facility is overwhelmed with patients.

The situation demands urgent action, yet UNFPA and our partners are prevented from reaching many of the women and girls who so desperately need our help. Aid convoys are being denied passage and cannot deliver urgently needed food to the north. I join the Secretary-General in urging Israel to allow for unimpeded and sustained access for humanitarian supplies throughout Gaza.

The crisis looming over pregnant women and newborns can – and must – be halted. But the window of opportunity is closing fast, and unless we act immediately, thousands more will die.

Monday’s long-awaited Security Council resolution demands an immediate ceasefire, the release of all remaining hostages and rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access. We call on all parties to the conflict to implement this resolution urgently.

Action is needed now. The women and girls affected by this crisis deserve nothing less.

## **XVII. ICJ issues an order in response to South Africa’s request, directs Israel to open land crossings into Gaza**

*On 28 March, the International Court of Justice issued an [order](#) an excerpt of which is reproduced below:*

...

THE COURT,

(1) By fourteen votes to two,

Reaffirms the provisional measures indicated in its Order of 26 January 2024;

IN FAVOUR: *President* Salam; *Judges* Tomka, Abraham, Yusuf, Xue, Bhandari, Iwasawa, Nolte, Charlesworth, Brant, Gómez Robledo, Cleveland, Aurescu, Tladi;

AGAINST: Vice-President Sebutinde; Judge ad hoc Barak;

(2) Indicates the following provisional measures:

The State of Israel shall, in conformity with its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and in view of the worsening conditions of life faced by Palestinians in Gaza, in particular the spread of famine and starvation:

(a) Unanimously,

Take all necessary and effective measures to ensure, without delay, in full co-operation with the United Nations, the unhindered provision at scale by all concerned of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance, including food, water, electricity, fuel, shelter, clothing, hygiene and sanitation requirements, as well as medical supplies and medical care to Palestinians throughout Gaza, including by increasing the capacity and number of land crossing points and maintaining them open for as long as necessary;

(b) By fifteen votes to one,

Ensure with immediate effect that its military does not commit acts which constitute a violation of any of the rights of the Palestinians in Gaza as a protected group under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, including by preventing, through any action, the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance;

IN FAVOUR: *President* Salam; *Vice-President* Sebutinde; *Judges* Tomka, Abraham, Yusuf, Xue, Bhandari, Iwasawa, Nolte, Charlesworth, Brant, Gómez Robledo, Cleveland, Aurescu, Tladi;

AGAINST: *Judge ad hoc* Barak;

(3) By fifteen votes to one,

*Decides* that the State of Israel shall submit a report to the Court on all measures taken to give effect to this Order, within one month as from the date of this Order.

IN FAVOUR: *President* Salam; *Vice-President* Sebutinde; *Judges* Tomka, Abraham, Yusuf, Xue, Bhandari, Iwasawa, Nolte, Charlesworth, Brant, Gómez Robledo, Cleveland, Aurescu, Tladi;

AGAINST: *Judge ad hoc* Barak

...