

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

## NGO Action News

21 March 2024

### Middle East

- On 21 March, [Gisha](#) issued the article “What was a water crisis in Gaza before October 7 has turned into a life-threatening shortage”. Gisha warns that this life-threatening shortage is a result of Israel’s illegal decision to turn off the water and electricity supply, bombardments of infrastructure, and lack of sufficient access to aid. It states that access to water is a basic human need, a fundamental right and a patently humanitarian imperative. It is therefore Israel’s obligation as an Occupying Power and a party to the hostilities to provide and facilitate access to safe, clean water for Gaza civilians.
- On 21 March, [Addameer - Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association](#) issued a press release on Mother’s Day to denounce the arrest of 28 Palestinian mothers by the Israeli authorities. Addameer describes this year as the bloodiest year for mothers and women amid “the comprehensive aggression and genocide against the Palestinian people in all places, where Palestinian women and mothers are subjected to various forms of systematic and serious abuses of their rights, particularly the female prisoners.”
- On 21 March, [Diakonia International Humanitarian Law Centre](#) provided a legal update on the violations of the rules on the protection of healthcare applicable in Gaza. The NGO assesses those violations against IHL rules that establish a general protection of healthcare in situations of armed conflict and the specific protections that IHL affords to healthcare in the conduct of hostilities and in situations of occupation. In addition to its obligations under IHL, Israel is also bound by the provisional measures order issued by the ICJ on 26 January 2024 in the *South Africa v. Israel* case.
- On 20 March, the [Society of Saint Yves](#) denounced the increased restriction of travel and security bans for Palestinians. It notes that since 7 October, thousands of Palestinians across the West Bank suddenly received security bans, preventing them from entering East Jerusalem and areas inside the Green Line and Seam zones.
- On 19 March, [five Israeli human rights organisations in Israel, including HaMoked - Centre for the Defense of the Individual, Physicians for Human Rights Israel and Adalah](#), filed a petition calling on Israel’s High Court of Justice (HCJ) to order the Israeli government to enable access of all humanitarian aid, equipment and staff to Gaza, and especially to the north of the Strip. It also called to provide for all the needs of the civilian population in keeping with Israel’s obligations as the Occupying Power. The petition is in light of the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and the lethal harm to civilians caused as a result of Israeli restrictions on access to aid into and throughout the Strip.

- On 19 March, [BADIL Resource Centre](#) reported on its ongoing participation in the UN Human Rights Council Session 55 where it submitted an oral statement under Item 4 “General Debate on the Promotion and Protection of All Human Rights”. The statement emphasized the ever-expanding protection gap facing all Palestinian refugees but especially those in the Gaza Strip. BADIL called on States to enforce a ceasefire and support and enable UNRWA’s work, especially in the Gaza Strip.
- On 18 March, [Physicians for Human Rights - Israel](#) reported on the joint petition to the High Court of Justice to allow the entry of all humanitarian aid and assistance shipments into Gaza and to ensure that the civilian population receives everything it needs to survive the war in accordance with Israel’s obligations as an Occupying Power.
- On 17 March, [B’Tselem](#), in its updates, said that Israel has ramped up efforts to drive Palestinian shepherding communities out of the northern Jordan Valley. It criticized Israel for reducing grazing areas available to Palestinians, blocking regular water supplies for taking measures to isolate the Jordan Valley from the rest of the West Bank, through cooperation and collaboration among the military, police, settlers and the Jordan Valley Regional Council.

### **Asia and Europe**

- On 20 March, the [Palestinian Return Centre \(PRC\)](#) handed over a briefing to UN Missions and British MPs entitled “Torture, Sexual Violence and Human Rights Violations Against Palestinians from Gaza”. PRC called on UN Member States to condemn inhumane practices of Israeli forces against Palestinians from Gaza and to immediately take actions to pressure Israel such as economic sanctions, arms embargoes and diplomatic protest to bring to an end the Israeli aggression on Palestinians.
- On 15 March, [Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights \(LPHR\)](#) issued its 2023 Child Annual Report (additionally covering the first semester of 2024). It documents that at least 31,184 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since 7 October, with at least 12,550 of those killed being children. Children in Gaza are starting to die from malnutrition, dehydration and hunger. They have been maimed at a devastating rate. In the West Bank, 144 children were killed by Israeli soldiers and settlers, while others continue to be detained and subject to physical abuse and ill-treatment. Schools were destroyed by the Israeli authorities in Gaza and the West Bank, among other grave violations.
- On 13 March, [Amnesty International](#) informed of its joint call along other 24 NGOs on governments to prioritize ceasefire and ground-based humanitarian aid as deaths from malnutrition and disease rise. It states that humanitarian organisations are expecting from Third States to urgently use their leverage towards an immediate ceasefire and to compel Israeli authorities to stop their deliberate blockade of lifesaving aid in all parts of the Gaza Strip, including through the full opening and lifting of restrictions on Rafah, Kerem Shalom/ Karam Abu Salem, Erez/Beit Hanoun and Karni crossings.

## **North America**

- On 19 March, [Oxfam and Human Rights Watch](#) informed that they provided evidence of Israel's violations of international humanitarian law in Gaza, undermining credibility of assurances for President Biden's National Security Memorandum (NSM)-20 arms policy. The two organisations submitted a joint memorandum to the US government regarding Israel's violations of international humanitarian law including with US weapons and the blocking of US-funded humanitarian assistance. The joint memorandum summarizes a wide range of Israeli violations of international humanitarian law, deprivation of services critical to the survival of the civilian population, and arbitrary denial and restrictions of humanitarian aid since 7 October.
- On 14 March, [J Street](#) welcomed the second round of settler violence sanctions under President Biden's recent Executive Order designed to promote peace, safety and human rights in the West Bank, and encouraged its continued application.
- On 13 March, [Foundation for Middle East Peace \(FMEP\)](#) fellow Peter Beinart hosted writer Ahmed Moor in a podcast, to discuss a range of urgent issues, including how the conversation about post-war Gaza does not include Palestinians and in what ways the Palestine solidarity movement can change US policy and actions.
- On 13 March, the [Institute for Middle East Understanding \(IMEU\)](#) issued the policy analysis "UNRWA: Implications of Cutting Off US Funding". It highlights that any effort to cut off funding to UNRWA, either temporarily or permanently, will greatly exacerbate the catastrophic humanitarian conditions faced by Palestinians under Israel's blockade of Gaza, leading to further deprivation, including starvation and dehydration.

## **United Nations**

- On 3 and 4 April in Geneva, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) will hold a conference with civil society organizations working on the question of Palestine titled "Building bridges with international civil society to address the ongoing Nakba." Further details of the conference as well as information on how to register are available [here](#).
- On 21 March, [UNRWA](#) issued a note to correspondents, "On the Independent Review of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East". It states that the Review follows serious allegations regarding the alleged involvement of UNRWA staff in the 7 October attack on Israel by Hamas. The group presented the Interim Report findings and recommendations to the UN Secretary-General. It has found that UNRWA has in place a significant number of mechanisms and procedures to ensure compliance with the humanitarian principle of neutrality, and the group has also identified critical areas that still need to be addressed.

- On 21 March, the [UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#) issued a statement, repeating its call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Deliberate actions such as blocking and restricting humanitarian aid appear to be calculated to bring about the physical destruction of Palestinian children, it states. The Committee draws attention to the ICJ's order on Israel to take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of all acts within the scope of article II of the Convention, including killing members of the group. It also calls for the remaining children held hostage to be released immediately and for Member States to resume their funding of UNRWA.

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



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