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PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

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relevant to the question of Palestine

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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. Palestine requests renewed consideration of its UN membership application

On 3 April, the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, referring to the application of the State of Palestine for membership in the United Nations, addressed the following letter to the Secretary-General ([A/78/837-S/2024/286](#)).

In reference to the application of the State of Palestine for membership in the United Nations contained in document [S/2011/592](#), dated 23 September 2011, and upon instructions of the Palestinian leadership, I have the honour to request that renewed consideration be given to this application by the Security Council during April 2024. I should be grateful if you would transmit this request to the Security Council as soon as possible.

(Signed) Riyadh Mansour

Minister

Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations

II. UN Palestinian Rights Committee organises a Civil Society Conference “Building Bridges with International Civil Society to Address the Ongoing Nakba.”

On April 3 and 4, the Conference of Civil Society Organisations working on the Question of Palestine entitled “Building Bridges with International Civil Society to Address the Ongoing Nakba” was organised by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The [Chair summary](#) of the event is replicated below:

CHAIR SUMMARY

The 2024 Conference of civil society organizations (CSOs) working on the Question of Palestine “Building Bridges with International Civil Society to Address the Ongoing Nakba” was convened in the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP). Ahead of the Opening Session, the Committee Delegation held a bilateral meeting with the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Nada Al Nashif.

The Conference focused, among others, on the role of civil society worldwide in advocating for a durable and sustainable ceasefire in Gaza and in achieving accountability for Israel’s war crimes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In convening this conference, the Committee aimed at strengthening partnerships with civil society organizations, identifying common priorities and messaging on core and emerging topics, discussing the responsibility of Member States to prevent and to protect the Palestinian people, and ensuring accountability as a fundamental requirement for the justice that is vital for peace. The conference also aimed at facilitating partnerships among CSOs worldwide working for a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

At the opening, the **Chair of the Committee, Ambassador Cheikh Niang (Senegal)**, reminded that as the Holy Month of Ramadan was coming to an end, the world had completed the sixth month of a devastating war in Gaza that would impact the Middle East for years to come. Under one of the most intense bombardments in modern history, in Gaza more than 32,000 people had been killed and more than 73,000 injured, the majority women and children. Further, Israel, the occupying Power, denied humanitarian assistance, water, fuel and other essential supplies, causing starvation and spread of disease as well as the destruction of civilian infrastructure, including schools and hospitals. More than 1.9 million Palestinians in Gaza had been forcibly displaced. In doing so, Israel continued to inflict the Nakba onto Palestinians in Gaza.

The war on Gaza and the heavy death toll it has caused is supplemented by the escalating violence by Israeli forces and settlers in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Ambassador Niang echoed the Secretary-General's appeal for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. The international community must protect the millions of Palestinian children, women and men whose lives were being threatened by Israel's ongoing military attacks against the Gaza Strip and across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

The adoption of the UN Security Council resolution 2728, on 25 March, calling for an immediate ceasefire and the lifting of all barriers to the provision of humanitarian assistance during the remaining weeks of Ramadan, was a welcome step. It needed to be implemented and coupled with a resumption of diplomatic efforts to realize a just and durable two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders as the only path to ending the Israeli occupation and peace in the Middle East.

The Committee welcomed the cooperation with civil society, as there was no better partner to inform about the realities of the current war on Gaza and to provide recommendations to the Committee and Member States on the enforcement of international humanitarian and human rights law. What was needed was a synergy of efforts to end the war, address the underlying drivers of the conflict and ensure the independence of the State of Palestine, as called for by international law, UN resolutions, and the vast majority of the peoples of the world.

In her opening statement, **Ms. Al Nashif, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights** and representing UN Secretary-General António Guterres at the Conference, stated that the event took place "in a harrowing context of unprecedented devastation," adding that – from 7 October 2023 to 20 March 2024 – 196 humanitarians, including UN workers, had been killed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

If not killed by bombs, Palestinian civilians were dying of disease and hunger, she continued, noting that a staggering 5 per cent of the population – mostly women and children – had been killed. Ms. Al Nashif strongly opposed a full-scale assault on Rafah, urging Israel to facilitate the safe distribution of humanitarian aid to the population. To this end, border crossings must be fully opened, she stressed, welcoming in this regard Security Council resolution 2728 (2024). The Deputy High Commissioner also voiced concern over shrinking civic space in Gaza, where most civil society organizations have lost their infrastructure, staff and funding, noting that it has become the deadliest place for journalists in the world.

The representative of the State of Palestine, **Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations in Geneva Ambassador Ibrahim Khraishi**, underscored that while Ramadan would end in a few days, the recently adopted ceasefire resolution had not been implemented and the world "continued to watch a genocide live on television". Palestinians did not believe in taking hostages, including those taken on 7 October, and believed that those detained in Gaza must be released – as should the Palestinians arbitrarily held in administrative detention in Israel.

Practical and peaceful measures must be taken to implement Security Council resolution 2728 (2024) and the ICJ order of 26 January, which called Israel to prevent acts of genocide in Gaza and to remedy the humanitarian situation there.

He also urged the United States to condemn the killings of aid workers and stop weapon exports to Israel.

During the first panel, themed “*The War on Gaza: Advocating for a Humanitarian Ceasefire and Assistance for the Palestinian People*,” speakers provided a picture of the situation in Gaza. “Time in Gaza is counted by a drop of water, a pill of medication for children, a body count of children killed,” said one. Palestinians were forcibly displaced to “safe areas” which were shelled, with 60 per cent of those killed and wounded having been bombed while believing that the blue United Nations flag would protect them.

The only way to stop the genocide was an immediate and permanent ceasefire. The Palestinian suffering had not started on 7 October; since 2013, Israel had undertaken several major military offenses in Gaza, with grave consequences for its inhabitants, and especially children. The latter also suffered threats of physical and psychological violence when arrested by the Israeli authorities, often amounting to torture.

Member States of the Global North were complicit in the genocide in Gaza by providing Israel with legal cover, funds and arms. Even the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, had failed to act according to his mandate in the most documented genocide in history.

Whereas in the case of Ukraine, the West had been shaken by Moscow’s invasion and reaffirmed the right of the Ukrainian people to resist the occupation by all means; had provided political, legal, financial and military support; had imposed seven waves of unprecedented sanctions on the Russian Federation – in the case of Palestine little had been done comparatively.

During the discussion, attendees raised the issue of sanctions and what CSOs and Member States could and should do; the difference of Israel, as a Jewish nationalist state, and Jews as a religious community, which should not be conflated with Israel; the lack of political will among Member States to hold Israel accountable for violations of international law or international humanitarian law; the unbreakable determination of Palestinians to achieve their self-determination; and the danger that the current conflict could threaten peace and security beyond the region if the solution was not based on multilateralism and international law.

In the second panel, on “*The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Ensuring Third Party Responsibility: Perspectives from Global and Regional Voices*,” speakers focused on CSO advocacy and action.

The Gaza conflict had triggered the greatest anti-war movement since the 2003 Iraq War. Some CSOs had brought legal action against perpetrators of violations of international law as well as their own Governments who are deemed complicit in Israel’s violations, for example in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. Ongoing abuses in the OPT, and inside 4 Israel, had been documented for many years, but many Western Governments had failed in their obligations to prevent violations of international law, now including genocide.

Speakers also highlighted how a continuing dehumanization of Palestinians, similar to that of non-white South Africans during its Apartheid, had undergirded the Palestine issue and reinforced discriminatory views, not only in Israel but also other regions in the world, for example the Global North.

Faced with this, civil society and its actors had a critical and decisive role to play, bringing together all who were active in different domains in the Global South, putting an end to the dehumanising narrative.

The Israeli hostages who were being held in Gaza against international law and those subjected to crimes on 7 October 2023 must not be forgotten, but the atrocities inflicted on the Palestinian people in Gaza today would not be happening if not for the provision of arms, diplomatic cover, and other forms of support by other States, including some who claimed to be the pillars of the international order. Thus, this moment was not only about the Palestinian question but the legitimacy and survival of the entire rules-based world order.

The Western complicity with Israel had not begun in 2023; there was a heavy historical responsibility on the conscience of those States. The crimes seen today were a direct result of the cloak of impunity that had been provided to Israel over many decades by others. In the end, no solution to the question of Palestine would be found until its foundations were addressed: the 1917 Balfour Declaration, the 1947 Partition resolution and the 1948 Nakba.

In the ensuing discussion, speakers raised issues such as how the South African experience could show ways to advance the Palestinian cause: the value and potential efficacy of sanctions, and specifically targeted boycotts of companies directly involved in Israeli violations of international law; the need for political will on the highest level to effect change; the role of the Palestinian diaspora; and possible suspension of Israel from the UN General Assembly.

The third panel on “*State Actions on Accountability: Discussing Best Practices*” outlined how, in these times of limited success in bringing a ceasefire and meeting the immediate humanitarian needs of Gazans, there existed successful initiatives from Global South countries. In terms of addressing Israel’s and other States’ accountability, past best practices had included the severing of diplomatic ties with Israel, economic and energy embargos.

Among the examples mentioned was the 2023 “Not On Our Dime” campaign in the United States, aiming to remove ‘charitable’ status from organisations providing funds to the “Israeli settler enterprise.” Another avenue was to change the narrative: many people in the Global North were starting to comprehend better that the Israeli policy was a blockade of Gaza, a genocide, a settler-colonial project with the main aim to displace Palestinians. Within the West, the debate was even no longer about Palestine, but about democracy itself, and the freedoms of expression and assembly.

In all this, there was a need to create a societal and political majority. This would be achieved by first having organizational unity – to synchronize efforts and messages – which should be the goal of all civil society groups working on the issue of Palestine.

In the ensuing discussion, speakers underscored that Israel’s treatment of Palestinians violates not only human rights but the sanctity of life itself. Accordingly, there was a proposal to adopt a standardized value of human life, with a monetary value, and then hold Israel responsible to provide compensation. Others placed the question of Palestine within a colonial/neo-colonial context and described as one of the last vestiges of settler-colonialism.

Some argued that the current focus, at the United Nations, on achieving full membership for the State of Palestine should not be a priority as it was more important to address Israeli crimes, to enact and implement sanctions and to force Israel to abide by the ICJ’s rulings. Others held that Palestine’s full recognition would provide access to different spaces and be a useful tool, if not a be-all-end-all. There were

also calls for political unity among the Palestinian leadership and for it to provide a strategy for action around the globe.

Attendees also mentioned Israel's use of "Artificial Intelligence" and "killer drones" (lethal autonomous weapons) during the war on Gaza, and its sales of such technology to other states including to gain political support and reminded of the urgent need for new international regulations in this field.

At the fourth panel, titled "*Ensuring Compliance with International Mechanisms After the ICJ Rulings*," speakers highlighted South Africa's actions at the ICJ as sign of the Global South's action to uphold international law and its impatience with Western countries' hypocrisy. The latter were embarking on a relentless campaign of distorting international rules and regulations to support their stance.

An example was that of Israel's right to self-defence, which in the case of Gaza did not apply, as Israel remained the occupying Power and thus Article 51 of the UN Charter did not apply. On the contrary, occupied people had an innate right to self-defence against an occupation.

One speaker alleged that the West's complicity in Israel's actions had made Gaza "not only a graveyard of children but a graveyard of international law," including through Western democracies having moved fast to suspend funding for UNRWA, based on mere accusations and without waiting for evidence.

The only way out and forward was clear: There would have to be an instant arms embargo and sanctions put in place, as Israel had failed to comply with the ICJ ruling. Also, the General Assembly should hold an emergency session to suspend Israel from the United Nations General Assembly, as had been done with South Africa in the 1970s and reconvene the Special Committee against Apartheid to address the Israeli case.

Another, more targeted, action would be to list Israel, together with Palestinian armed groups, in the upcoming Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC), as a continued failure to list them would undermine the CAAC Agenda's credibility. Listing a perpetrator would send a signal – no Government wished to appear on the same list as ISIS or Boko Haram.

In the ensuing discussion, speakers raised such issues as South Africa's steps to put an end to the Gaza war, which consolidated the legal approach to settling disputes, whilst being committed to the United Nations principles. Others recalled that Arabs and Jews had lived in peace for hundreds of years – understanding what happened after the Zionist movement began would help to solve the question of Palestine. Religion was not at the root of the conflict – it was Zionists who were intimidating the world into providing them with support, using their religion and the Jewish suffering during the Holocaust as a pretext.

However, Palestinians were determined to hold on to their humanity, despite the world giving them every reason not to. They were demanding their human rights, to which they were entitled, despite what their oppressors and the world thought. Palestinians were on the right side of history and would prevail, whereas history would judge Israel and those who stood by watching the genocide.

In the closing session the **Chair of the Committee, Ambassador Cheikh Niang (Senegal)**, highlighted how, during the Conference, Palestinian and international experts had detailed their efforts to expose the gross violations of the occupying Power, demanding a ceasefire and accountability for the war crimes. Justice was a pre-requisite to end cycles of violence and for Palestinians and Israelis to take meaningful steps towards peace. Investigations were thus needed to look into all human rights violations, under international law, including hostage-taking, wanton destruction of civilian property, collective punishment, forced displacement, incitement to hatred and violence, sexual assault and torture, among

others. The two days of the Conference once more showcased the need for the international community to stand together to put an end to the Israeli oppression of the Palestinian community.

Ambassador Ibrahim Khraishi (Palestine) expressed his hope that the Conference would add momentum to the decisions at the UN Human Rights Council, concurrently in Geneva in session. Palestinians had been one of the victims of the Second World War, despite not having any responsibility therein, losing any opportunity to craft their own independent status, and instead facing an unjust divide of the country, followed by the ongoing Nakba, hand in glove with ethnic cleansing and genocide. The world had a responsibility to awaken its conscience and move to action, to stick to its principles to avoid the law of the jungle prevailing.

* * *

****Note: This Summary attempts to provide an overall picture of the deliberations of the Conference. A detailed report, including specific questions that were addressed during the interactive discussions, will be published by the Division for Palestinian Rights in due course.*

III. UN Human Rights Office stresses the vital need to ensure humanitarian aid and protect humanitarian workers in Gaza

On 5 April, Jeremy Laurence, the Spokesperson for the United Nation High Commissioner for Human Rights issued the following [statement](#):

As we approach six months of hostilities, it is with deep sadness and outrage that we reflect on the devastation and death toll in Israel and Gaza. Over 33,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, are dead, 75,000 or more are injured, and at least 7,000 are presumed dead under the rubble. Over 1,200 are dead in Israel and hundreds injured. More than 100 hostages remain in captivity. Huge swathes of Gaza have been bombed into oblivion. The Gaza Strip has changed forever.

The violations of international law committed since 7 October in Israel and Gaza, including gross violations of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict, as well as the destruction and suffering of civilians in Gaza over the last six months, are unprecedented. And the risk of further atrocity crimes is high.

The world has collectively spoken that this carnage and wanton destruction must end immediately. The hostages must be released unconditionally. Humanitarian aid and other goods necessary for the survival of the civilian population must be allowed to flood into Gaza and be safely distributed to every part of the Strip.

Also, the High Commissioner stresses again that there must be accountability for the serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law that have been perpetrated, as well as a renewed resolve to reach a political solution to ensure Palestinians' rights to self-determination, equality and non-discrimination, and which guarantees that Palestinians and Israelis can live side by side in peace. The occupation must end. This should not just be rhetoric, but action is needed now.

This week, the world was shocked by Israel's killing of seven people working for World Central Kitchen. So far, nearly 200 humanitarian workers have been killed in Gaza, including close to 180 UN staff.

The Israeli airstrikes that killed World Central Kitchen personnel underline the horrific conditions under which humanitarian workers are operating in Gaza. Israel has also killed law enforcement officials and others involved in securing humanitarian aid delivery, directly contributing to the breakdown of civil order and putting humanitarian workers and those in need of aid in further danger.

Following these latest attacks, NGOs, including the World Central Kitchen and Anera, have suspended aid delivery and distribution to Palestinians in Gaza, increasing the already real risk of more deaths from famine and disease at larger scale.

International law requires all parties to respect and protect humanitarian relief personnel and ensure their safety, security, and freedom of movement. Israel, as the occupying power, has the additional obligation to ensure, to the fullest extent possible, that the basic needs of the population of Gaza are met. This means that it must ensure the provision of food and medical care to the population commensurate with its needs, and if it is unable to do so, it must facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations to deliver that assistance and the access of the population to it in a safe and dignified manner.

Attacking people or objects involved in humanitarian assistance may amount to a war crime. As the High Commissioner has repeatedly stated, impunity must end. Independent, thorough and effective investigations into all alleged violations of international human rights and humanitarian law committed on 7 October and subsequently need to be conducted promptly. The High Commissioner reiterates his call on all duty bearers to ensure cooperation with international mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court. All victims and their families should be granted full reparation.

IV. Colombia decides to intervene in the South Africa v. Israel ICJ case

On 5 April, Colombia, invoking Article 63 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice, [filed](#) in the Registry of the Court a declaration of intervention in the case concerning Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel).

Today, Colombia, invoking Article 63 of the Statute of the Court, filed in the Registry of the Court a declaration of intervention in the case concerning Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel).

Pursuant to Article 63 of the Statute, whenever the construction of a convention to which States other than those concerned in the case are parties is in question, each of these States has the right to intervene in the proceedings. If a State uses this right, the construction given by the judgment of the Court will be equally binding upon it.

In availing itself of the right of intervention conferred by Article 63 of the Statute, Colombia relies on its status as a party to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the “Genocide Convention”). In its declaration, Colombia states that the Genocide Convention is “a cardinal instrument of international law,” and contends that the case “raises vital issues concerning the interpretation and application of several provisions of the Genocide Convention that reflect both *erga omnes* obligations, owed to the international community as a whole, and *erga omnes partes* obligations, owed to all States parties to the treaty.” Colombia states that it is submitting its declaration “in the genuine belief that the States parties to the Genocide Convention should do everything in their power to contribute to ensure the prevention, suppression and punishment of genocide [,] and therefore, to assist the Court in finding the

responsibility of any State Party to the Convention, for its failure to comply with the obligations contained therein.”

In accordance with Article 83 of the Rules of Court, South Africa and Israel have been invited to furnish written observations on Colombia’s declaration of intervention.

The full text of Colombia’s declaration of intervention is available on the Court’s [website](#).

V. Human Rights Council adopts three resolutions, calls for Gaza ceasefire, end to forcible transfer of Palestinians and an arms embargo

On 5 April, the Human Rights Council adopted three resolutions concerned the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem ([A/HRC/RES/55/28](#)), the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination ([A/HRC/RES/55/30](#)), and Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan ([A/HRC/RES/55/32](#)). The texts and voting results are replicated below:

55/28. Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice

The Human Rights Council,

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

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid and all other relevant conventions, and affirming that these international conventions and human rights instruments are, among others, applicable to and must be respected in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Recalling also the relevant rules and principles of international law, including international humanitarian law, in particular the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 (the Fourth Geneva Convention), which is applicable to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Recalling further the statement of 15 July 1999 and the declarations adopted on 5 December 2001 and 17 December 2014 at the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention on measures to enforce the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Recalling the relevant resolutions of the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly and the Security Council,

Recalling also relevant United Nations reports, including the outcome reports of fact-finding missions and commissions of inquiry, and the important recommendations made therein, and calling upon all duty bearers and United Nations bodies to pursue the implementation of those recommendations,

Recalling further the order of the International Court of Justice of 26 January 2024 that indicated provisional measures in the case lodged by South Africa against Israel on the application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (*South Africa v. Israel*) in relation to the right of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip to be protected from all acts within the scope of articles II and III of the Convention,

Recalling the assessment of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel that Israel has no intention of ending its occupation and is acting to alter the demography of the Occupied Palestinian Territory through the maintenance of a repressive environment for Palestinians and a favourable environment for Israeli settlers and that it is incrementally annexing the territory,¹

Stressing the urgency of achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967,

Affirming the obligation of all parties to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law,

Reaffirming the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and liberation from colonial and foreign domination and foreign occupation in accordance with international law,

Emphasizing the obligation of States to investigate and prosecute grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and other serious violations of international humanitarian law, to end impunity, to uphold their obligations, to ensure respect and to promote international accountability,

Expressing deep concern that the sale, diversion and transfers of arms and jet fuel increase the ability of Israel, the occupying Power, to commit serious violations, including attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructures, disregard international law and seriously undermine the enjoyment of human rights,

Regretting the lack of progress made in the conduct of domestic investigations in accordance with international law standards, and aware of the existence of numerous legal, procedural and practical obstacles in the Israeli and Palestinian civil and criminal legal systems contributing to the denial of access to justice for Palestinian victims and of their right to an effective judicial remedy,

Noting the accession by the State of Palestine to several human rights treaties and the core humanitarian law conventions, and its accession on 2 January 2015 to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,

Noting in particular the Court's reply, including that the construction of the wall being built by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime are contrary to international law,

Recalling that, in the above-mentioned advisory opinion, the International Court of Justice affirmed that Israel is the occupying Power of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and that

¹ See A/78/198, A/HRC/50/21 and A/HRC/53/22.

Article 51 of the Charter is not applicable to cases where a threat originates from a territory over which Israel exercises control,

Reaffirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and the prohibition of all discriminatory policies and practices, and deeply concerned at the fragmentation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, through settlement activities and other measures that are tantamount to de facto annexation of Palestinian land,

Gravely concerned that long-standing impunity for international law violations has allowed for the recurrence of grave breaches and serious violations without consequence, and stressing the need to ensure accountability for all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in order to end impunity, ensure the access of victims to justice and effective remedies, deter further violations, protect civilians and promote peace,

Expressing grave concern at reports of serious human rights violations and grave breaches of international humanitarian law, including of possible war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and all other actions designed to change the legal status, geographical character and demographic composition of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and at the determination on 26 January 2024 by the International Court of Justice that there is a plausible risk of genocide,

Deploing the grave consequences of the conflict in and around the Gaza Strip, including the high number of casualties, in particular among Palestinian civilians, including infants, children, women, youth, civil society actors, lawyers, journalists and other media workers, medical personnel, humanitarian aid workers and the highest number of United Nations staff killed anywhere in the world during a conflict, as well as ongoing violations of international law, and calling for full respect for international humanitarian and human rights law and for the principles of legality, distinction, precaution and proportionality,

Appalled by the catastrophic humanitarian, socioeconomic and security situation in the Gaza Strip resulting from repeated military operations, prolonged closures and severe economic impediments and movement restrictions, including for humanitarian access, amounting to collective punishment in the form of a blockade, as well as the use of starvation as a method of warfare, which has resulted in famine, and the obstruction of supplies indispensable for the survival of the civilian population, the widespread and wanton destruction of residential areas and critical civilian infrastructure, including refugee camps, United Nations facilities, educational institutions, medical facilities, water, sanitation and telecommunication networks and fuel supplies by Israel, the occupying Power, and the short- and long-term detrimental impact of this situation on human rights,

Expressing grave concern at the firing of rockets into Israel,

Stressing the need to end immediately the closure of the Gaza Strip and all policies and practices by Israel, in violation of international law, including its obligations as the occupying Power under international humanitarian law,

Stressing also the need to end the Israeli policy of closures and the imposition of severe restrictions and checkpoints, several of which have been transformed into structures akin to permanent border crossings, other physical obstacles and a permit regime, which are applied in a discriminatory manner, affecting the Palestinian population only and all of which obstruct the freedom of movement of persons and goods, including medical and humanitarian goods, throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and impair the Territory's contiguity, violating the human rights of the Palestinian people,

Stressing further the need for all parties, in conformity with relevant provisions of international humanitarian law, to cooperate fully with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies and organizations, to allow full, timely, unconditional, unhindered and safe humanitarian access and to ensure access of humanitarian personnel and the delivery of supplies and equipment in order to allow such personnel to efficiently perform their task of assisting affected civilian populations, including refugees and internally displaced persons, and the need for the independence, neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian organizations to be respected and protected in accordance with international law,

Deploing all policies and practices whereby Israeli settlers who reside illegally in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, are accorded preferential treatment over the Palestinian population, and deploring also the widespread violations of the human rights of Palestinian civilians, including as a result of recurrent and escalating terror attacks by settlers,

Expressing deep concern that thousands of Palestinians, including many children, women, elected members of the Palestinian Legislative Council and human rights defenders, continue to be detained, including under terms of administrative detention, with limited or no judicial recourse, and held in Israeli prisons or detention centres under harsh conditions, including unhygienic conditions, solitary confinement, with restricted access to proper medical care, denial of family visits and denial of due process, which impair their well-being, and appalled by the ill-treatment, harassment and torture of Palestinian prisoners and all reports of inhumane treatment and torture,

Recalling the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules), and calling for respect for those rules,

Recalling also the prohibition under international humanitarian law of individual and mass forcible transfers, and of the deportation of protected persons, from occupied territory, and the prohibition of deportation or transfer by the occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies,

Deploing the practice of withholding the bodies of those killed, and calling for the release of the bodies that have not yet been returned to their relatives, in accordance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law,

Recognizing the work of Palestinian, Israeli and international civil society actors, lawyers, journalists and other media workers, humanitarian agencies and human rights defenders in documenting and countering violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and deploring the deliberate targeting of protected persons by Israel, the occupying Power,

Expressing deep concern that disinformation spread by States and State-sponsored actors, including international media outlets, can accompany serious violations of international law and can have a negative impact on the enjoyment of human rights, in particular in times of armed conflict,

Convinced of the need for an international presence to monitor the situation, to contribute to ending the violence and protecting the Palestinian civilian population and to help the parties to implement the agreements reached, and stressing the importance of Palestinian, Israeli and international non-governmental organizations, which have been instrumental to human rights monitoring, protection and relief efforts undertaken by the international community, and expressing concern about the decision taken by Israel to proscribe, ban or smear certain non-governmental organizations,

1. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, end its occupation of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and stresses that all efforts to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be grounded in respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law and relevant United Nations resolutions;

2. *Also demands* that Israel immediately lift its blockade on the Gaza Strip and all other forms of collective punishment;

3. *Calls for* an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, for immediate emergency humanitarian access and assistance, in particular through crossings and land routes, and for the urgent restoration of basic necessities to the Palestinian population in Gaza;

4. *Calls upon* all States to take immediate action to prevent the continued forcible transfer of Palestinians within or from Gaza, in compliance with their obligations under international law;

5. *Warns* against any large-scale military operations in the city of Rafah, and their ensuing devastating humanitarian consequences;

6. *Condemns* the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare in Gaza, the unlawful denial of humanitarian access, wilful impediment to relief supplies and deprivation of objects indispensable to the survival of civilians, including food, water, electricity, fuel and telecommunications, by Israel, the occupying Power;

7. *Expresses grave concern* at statements by Israeli officials amounting to incitement to genocide, and demands that Israel uphold its legal responsibility to prevent genocide and fully abide by the provisional measures issued by the International Court of Justice on 26 January 2024;

8. *Deplores* the ongoing policy of Israel to impose punitive measures on the Palestinian people, leadership and civil society, and calls upon Israel to end its practice of “withholding” Palestinian tax revenues;

9. *Stresses* the imperative of credible, timely and comprehensive accountability for all violations of international law in order to attain justice for victims and establish a just and sustainable peace;

10. *Welcomes* the ongoing investigation of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court into the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and looks forward to its continuation, with a view to ensuring accountability for the crimes under the Court’s jurisdiction;

11. *Reiterates* that all measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in violation of the relevant provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and contrary to the relevant resolutions of the Security Council are illegal and have no validity;

12. *Affirms* that no State shall recognize as lawful a situation created by a serious breach by a State of an obligation arising under a peremptory norm of general international law, nor render aid or assistance in maintaining that situation, and that all States shall cooperate to bring to an end through lawful means any serious breach;

13. *Recognizes* the grave violations of multiple peremptory norms by Israel, and calls upon all States to ensure that their arms exports do not contribute to or benefit from this unlawful situation;

14. *Calls upon* all States to cease the sale, transfer and diversion of arms, munitions and other military equipment to Israel, the occupying Power, in order to prevent further violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights, and to refrain, in accordance with international norms and standards, from the export, sale or transfer of surveillance goods and technologies and less-lethal weapons, including “dual-use” items, when they assess that there are reasonable grounds to suspect that such goods, technologies or weapons might be used to violate or abuse human rights;

15. *Deplores* the persistent non-cooperation of Israel with the special procedures of the Human Rights Council and other United Nations mechanisms seeking to investigate alleged violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and calls for its full cooperation with the Council and all its special procedures, relevant mechanisms and inquiries and with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

16. *Demands* that Israel grant immediate access to the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, the special procedures of the Human Rights Council and the Office of the High Commissioner;

17. *Also demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, cease all illegal actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including the establishment and expansion of settlements; the demolition of privately owned and residential structures belonging to Palestinians, including punitive home demolitions; the forcible transfer of Palestinian inhabitants and the revocation of residency permits of Palestinians living in East Jerusalem through various discriminatory laws; excavations in and around religious and historic sites; and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the territory as a whole, all of which have, inter alia, a grave and detrimental impact on the human rights of the Palestinian people and the prospects for a just and peaceful settlement;

18. *Further demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations under international law, as mentioned in the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice and demanded by the General Assembly in its resolutions ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003 and ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004, and that it immediately cease the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, dismantle forthwith the structure situated therein, repeal or render ineffective all legislative and regulatory acts relating thereto, and make reparation for all damage caused by the construction of the wall, which has had a grave impact on the human rights and the socioeconomic living conditions of the Palestinian people;

19. *Calls upon* Israel to immediately cease its demolitions or plans for demolition that would result in the continued forcible transfer or forced eviction of Palestinians, to facilitate the return of Palestinian families and communities already subjected to forcible transfer or eviction to their original dwellings and to ensure adequate housing and legal security of tenure;

20. *Expresses grave concern* at the restrictions imposed by Israel that impede the access of Christian and Muslim worshippers to holy sites in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and calls upon Israel to ensure non-discrimination on grounds of religion or belief and the preservation of and peaceful access to all religious sites;

21. *Reaffirms* the responsibility of Israel, the occupying Power, to respect the right to health of all persons within the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to facilitate the immediate,

sustained and unfettered passage of humanitarian relief, including the access of medical personnel, the entry of humanitarian equipment, transport and supplies to all areas under occupation and the granting of exit permits for patients in need of medical treatment outside the Gaza Strip, and stresses the need for the unhindered passage of ambulances at checkpoints, especially in times of conflict;

22. *Urges* Israel to end its discriminatory water resource allocation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in the Jordan Valley area, which has been affected by the destruction of the wells of local civilians, roof water tanks and other water and irrigation facilities under military and settler operation since 1967;

23. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, comply fully with international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and that it cease all measures and actions taken in breach of these bodies of law, as well as discriminatory legislation, policies and actions in the Occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, that violate the human rights of the Palestinian people, including those carried out as collective punishment in violation of international humanitarian law, and its obstruction of humanitarian assistance and independent and impartial actions of civil society;

24. *Also demands* that Israel take immediate measures to prohibit and eradicate all of its discriminatory policies and practices, which severely and disproportionately affect the Palestinian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, by terminating the system of segregated roads for the exclusive use of the Israeli population, the settlement enterprise and the restrictions on the freedom of movement of Palestinians and by dismantling the illegal wall;

25. *Reaffirms* that criticism of violations of international law by Israel should not be conflated with antisemitism;

26. *Reiterates* the need for respect for the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and for guarantees of the freedom of movement of persons and goods within the Palestinian territory, including movement into and from East Jerusalem, into and from the Gaza Strip, between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and to and from the outside world;

27. *Condemns* all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction, including unlawful lethal and other excessive use of force by Israeli occupying forces against Palestinian civilians, including against civilians with special protected status under international law and who pose no imminent threat to life;

28. *Also condemns* the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects by Israel in populated areas in Gaza and the use of artificial intelligence to aid military decision-making that may contribute to the commission of international crimes;

29. *Expresses grave concern* at the reverberating effects of the use of explosive weapons on hospitals, schools, water, electricity and shelter, which are affecting millions of Palestinians;

30. *Condemns* the firing of rockets against Israeli civilian areas, resulting in loss of life and injury, and calls for an end to all actions by militants and armed groups contrary to international law;

31. *Also condemns* the targeting of civilians, including on 7 October 2023, and demands the immediate release of all remaining hostages, persons arbitrarily detained and victims of enforced disappearance as well as ensuring immediate humanitarian access to the hostages and detainees in line with international law;

32. *Calls upon* all States to abide by international law and all High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in accordance with article 1 common to the Geneva Conventions, and to fulfil their obligations under articles 146, 147 and 148 of the Fourth Geneva Convention with regard to penal sanctions, grave breaches and the responsibilities of the High Contracting Parties;

33. *Urges* all States to continue to provide emergency assistance, including humanitarian relief and development assistance, to the Palestinian people to alleviate the financial crisis and the dire socioeconomic and humanitarian situation, particularly in the Gaza Strip, emphasizes the vital role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in providing basic and necessary services for millions of Palestinians in the region, and calls upon all States to ensure that the Agency receives predictable sustained and sufficient funding to fulfil its mandate;

34. *Calls for* an end to all ongoing policies of harassment, threats, intimidation and reprisals, detention and expulsion against human rights defenders, journalists, media workers and civil society actors who peacefully advocate for the rights of the Palestinian people, including by cooperating with United Nations human rights bodies, calls for their protection, and underscores the need to investigate all such acts and to ensure accountability and effective remedies;

35. *Expresses concern* at the spread of disinformation and propaganda, including on the Internet, which can be designed and implemented to mislead, to violate human rights, including the right to freedom of expression, to spread hatred, racism, xenophobia, negative stereotyping or stigmatization and to incite violence, discrimination and hostility, and emphasizes the important contribution by journalists in countering this trend;

36. *Calls upon* Israel to revoke all unsubstantiated designations of Palestinian human rights and humanitarian organizations as terrorist or unlawful organizations and to refrain from using anti-terrorism legislation to undermine civil society and its valuable work and contributions to the pursuit of accountability;

37. *Affirms* that undue restrictions imposed by States on peaceful protests and civil society working to protect human rights and advocating for respect of international law in the context of the military assault on Gaza run contrary to the obligations of States under international law;

38. *Expresses deep concern* at the conditions of Palestinian prisoners and detainees, including minors, in Israeli jails and detention centres and at the continued use of administrative detention, and calls upon Israel to explicitly prohibit torture, including psychological torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, to fully respect and abide by its obligations under international law towards all Palestinian prisoners and detainees in its custody, including by ensuring access to medical care, to implement fully the agreement reached in May 2012 for a prompt and independent investigation into all cases of death in custody and to release immediately all Palestinian prisoners, including Palestinian legislators, detained in violation of international law;

39. *Demands* that Israel cease its policy of transferring prisoners from the Occupied Palestinian Territory into the territory of Israel and respect fully its obligations under article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention;

40. *Reaffirms* that children shall be the object of special respect and shall be protected against any form of indecent assault, emphasizes that any arrest, detention or trial of Palestinian children by Israel is in violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and notes that the Israeli policy of holding criminal

proceedings against children in military courts is illegal and falls short of providing the necessary guarantees to ensure respect for their rights and infringes upon their right to non-discrimination;

41. *Emphasizes* the need to ensure that all those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law are held to account through appropriate, fair and independent national or international criminal justice mechanisms and to ensure the provision of an effective remedy for all victims, including full reparations, and stresses the need to pursue practical steps towards these goals to ensure justice for all victims and to contribute to the prevention of future violations and international crimes;

42. *Invites* the General Assembly to recommend that the Government of Switzerland, in its capacity as depositary of the Fourth Geneva Convention, promptly convene the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Convention on measures to enforce the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to ensure its respect in accordance with article 1 common to the four Geneva Conventions, bearing in mind the statement adopted by the Conference of the High Contracting Parties on 15 July 1999 and the declarations adopted by the Conference on 5 December 2001 and 17 December 2014;

43. *Requests* the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel to report on both the direct and indirect transfer or sale of arms, munitions, parts, components and dual use items to Israel, the occupying Power, including those that have been used during the Israeli military operation in Gaza since 7 October 2023, and to analyse the legal consequences of these transfers, applying international humanitarian law, customary international law related to State responsibility and the Arms Trade Treaty, where applicable, and to present its report to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-ninth session;

44. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in view of the unprecedented magnitude of crimes and violations, to ensure the availability of all additional resources, including through voluntary resources, necessary to enable the Commission of Inquiry to carry out its mandate, in particular investigative and outreach expertise, and in the areas of legal analysis and evidence-collection;

45. *Requests* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to deploy the additional necessary personnel, expertise and logistics to its country office in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to document and pursue accountability for violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

46. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to report on the implementation of the present resolution to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-eighth session, to be followed by an interactive dialogue;

47. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

*56th meeting
5 April 2024*

[Adopted by a recorded vote of 28 to 6, with 13 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Algeria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Burundi, Chile, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Eritrea, Finland, Gambia, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Morocco, Qatar, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam

Against:

Argentina, Bulgaria, Germany, Malawi, Paraguay, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Benin, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, France, Georgia, India, Japan, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Romania]

55/30. Right of the Palestinian people to self-determination

The Human Rights Council,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the provisions of Articles 1 and 55 thereof, which affirm the right of peoples to self-determination, reaffirming the need for the scrupulous respect of the principle of refraining in international relations from the threat or use of force, as specified in the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, and affirming the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory resulting from the threat or use of force,

Guided also by the provisions of article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which affirm that all peoples have the right to self-determination,

Guided further by the International Covenants on Human Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, in particular article 1 thereof, and by the provisions of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted on 25 June 1993 by the World Conference on Human Rights, and in particular Part I, paragraphs 2 and 3, relating to the right of self-determination of all peoples, and especially those subject to foreign occupation,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 181 A and B (II) of 29 November 1947 and 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and all other relevant United Nations resolutions, including those adopted by the Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Council, that confirm and define the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, particularly their right to self-determination,

Recalling also Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002 and 1402 (2002) of 30 March 2002,

Recalling further General Assembly resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012,

Reaffirming the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in accordance with the provisions of the Charter, relevant United Nations resolutions and declarations, and the provisions of international covenants and instruments relating to the right to self-determination as an international principle and as a right of all peoples in the world, and emphasizing that this *jus cogens* norm of international law is a basic prerequisite for achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Deploping the plight of millions of Palestine refugees and displaced persons who have been uprooted from their homes, and expressing deep regret at the fact that more than half of the Palestinian people continue to live in exile in refugee camps throughout the region and the diaspora,

Affirming the applicability of the principle of permanent sovereignty over natural resources to the Palestinian situation as an integral component of the right to self-determination,

Recalling the conclusion of the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion of 9 July 2004, that the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, which is a right *erga omnes*, is severely impeded by Israel, the occupying Power, through the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which, together with the Israeli settlement enterprise and measures previously taken, result in grave breaches of international humanitarian law and serious violations of international human rights law, including the forcible transfer of Palestinians and Israeli acquisition of Palestinian land,

Considering that the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people is being violated further by Israel through the existence and ongoing expansion of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Noting that the failure to bring the occupation to an end after 57 years heightens the international responsibility to uphold the human rights of the Palestinian people, and expressing its deep regret that the question of Palestine has remained unresolved for 77 years, since the adoption by the General Assembly on 29 November 1947 of its resolution 181 A and B (II) on partition,

Reaffirming that the United Nations will continue to be engaged on the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law,

1. *Reaffirms* the inalienable, permanent and unqualified right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including their right to live in freedom, justice and dignity and the right to their independent State of Palestine;

2. *Also reaffirms* the need to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in conformity with international law and other internationally agreed parameters, including all relevant United Nations resolutions;

3. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to immediately end its occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to reverse and redress any impediments to the political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Palestine, and reaffirms its support for the solution of two States, Palestine and Israel, living side by side in peace and security;

4. *Expresses grave concern* at any action taken in contravention of the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions relevant to Jerusalem;

5. *Also expresses grave concern* at the fragmentation and the changes in the demographic composition of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which are resulting from the continuing construction and expansion of settlements, forcible transfer of Palestinians and construction of the wall by Israel, stresses that this fragmentation, which undermines the possibility of the Palestinian people realizing their right to self-determination, is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and emphasizes in this regard the need for respect for and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

6. *Confirms* that the right of the Palestinian people to permanent sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources must be used in the interest of their national development, the well-being of the Palestinian people and as part of the realization of their right to self-determination;

7. *Calls upon* all States to ensure their obligations of non-recognition, non-aid or assistance with regard to the serious breaches of peremptory norms of international law by Israel, in particular of the prohibition of the acquisition of territory by force, in order to ensure the exercise of the right to self-determination, and also calls upon them to cooperate further to bring, through lawful means, an end to these serious breaches and a reversal of the illegal policies and practices of Israel;

8. *Urges* all States to adopt measures as required to promote the realization of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, and to render assistance to the United Nations in carrying out the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter regarding the implementation of this right;

9. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

56th meeting
5 April 2024

[Adopted by a recorded vote of 42 to 2, with 3 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Algeria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Eritrea, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Qatar, Romania, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam

Against:

Paraguay, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Argentina, Cameroon]

55/32. Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan

The Human Rights Council,

Guided by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and affirming the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force,

Reaffirming that all States have an obligation to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, as stated in the Charter and elaborated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights and other applicable instruments,

Recalling all relevant resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights, the Human Rights Council, the Security Council and the General Assembly reaffirming, inter alia, the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, including in East Jerusalem,

Recalling also all relevant United Nations reports, including reports by mechanisms of the Human Rights Council, and calling upon all duty bearers and United Nations bodies to pursue the implementation of the recommendations contained therein,

Noting the accession by the State of Palestine to several human rights treaties and the core humanitarian law conventions, and its accession on 2 January 2015 to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,

Reaffirming the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 (Fourth Geneva Convention), to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to the occupied Syrian Golan,

Recalling the declarations adopted at the Conferences of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, held in Geneva on 5 December 2001 and 17 December 2014, and reaffirming that States should not recognize as lawful a situation arising from breaches of peremptory norms of international law,

Affirming that the transfer by the occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population to the territory it occupies, and the forcible transfer of the protected Palestinian population, constitute grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention and relevant provisions of customary international law, including those codified in Additional Protocol I to the four Geneva Conventions,

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

Expressing grave concern at the continuing construction by Israel of its illegal settlements and the illegal wall inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, in violation of international law, and expressing its concern, in particular, at the route of the wall in departure from the Armistice Line of 1949, and in such a way as to include the great majority of the Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, thereby causing humanitarian hardship and a serious decline in socioeconomic conditions for the Palestinian people, fragmenting the territorial contiguity of the Territory and undermining the viability of a Palestinian State, creating a fait accompli on the ground that could be tantamount to de facto annexation in departure from the Armistice Line of 1949 and making the two-State solution physically impossible to implement,

Noting that the International Court of Justice concluded, inter alia, that the Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, had been established in breach of international law,

Expressing its grave concern at any action taken by any body, governmental or non-governmental, in violation of the Security Council and General Assembly resolutions relevant to Jerusalem,

Expressing its grave concern also at the calls made by Israeli officials for the annexation of Palestinian territory in whole or in part, and recalling that such measures are internationally wrongful and are not to be recognized, aided or assisted,

Noting that Israel has been planning, implementing, facilitating and promoting the establishment and expansion of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 1967, through, inter alia, the granting of benefits and incentives to settlements and settlers,

Affirming that the Israeli settlement policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, seriously endanger the viability of the two-State solution, undermine the physical possibility of its realization, entrench a one-State reality of unequal rights and constitute an attempted acquisition of sovereignty over territory through the denial of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination,

Noting in this regard that the Israeli settlements fragment the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, into isolated geographical units, severely undermining the exercise of Palestinian self-determination, and deeply concerned that the magnitude, persistence and character of the settlement enterprise and explicit statements made by Israeli officials confirm that the occupation has been established with the intention of making it permanent, in violation of the prohibition of acquisition of territory resulting from the use of force,

Noting also that the settlement enterprise and the impunity associated with its persistence, expansion and related violence continue to be a root cause of many violations of Palestinians' human rights, and constitute the main factors perpetuating the prolonged and belligerent occupation by Israel of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 1967,

Deploping in particular the construction and expansion of settlements by Israel in and around occupied East Jerusalem, including its so-called E-1 plan, which aims to connect its illegal settlements around and further isolate occupied East Jerusalem, the continuing demolition of Palestinian homes, livelihoods and community infrastructure, including those structures provided as humanitarian relief by State donors and independent humanitarian agencies, the forcible transfer of Palestinian families from the city, the revocation of Palestinian residency rights in the city and ongoing settlement activities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, all of which further fragment and undermine the contiguity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory,

Gravely concerned about all acts of terror, violence, destruction, harassment, provocation and incitement by extremist Israeli settlers and groups of armed settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, against Palestinian civilians, including children, and their properties, including historic and religious sites and agricultural lands, which constitute a long-standing and State-sponsored phenomenon aimed at, inter alia, accelerating the forcible transfer of the occupied population and facilitating the expansion of settlements,

Expressing grave concern at the impunity for acts of settler violence and terrorism, stressing the failure of Israel to properly investigate and ensure accountability for all of those acts, despite knowledge of the identities of settlers engaged in acts of violence, intimidation or terror against Palestinian civilians, often with military support and under the protection of and with the participation of Israeli occupying forces, and stressing also the need for international investigations in this regard,

Gravely concerned by the detrimental impact of the Israeli settlements on Palestinian and other Arab natural resources, especially as a result of the appropriation of land, denial of access to farmers and the dispossession of their land and crops, the forced diversion of water resources, the destruction of orchards and crops and the seizure of water wells by Israeli settlers, and of the dire socioeconomic and humanitarian consequences in this regard, including the loss of livelihoods in the agricultural sector, which precludes the Palestinian people from being able to exercise permanent sovereignty over their natural resources,

Acknowledging that numerous Israeli policies and practices relating to settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, amount to blatant discrimination, including through the creation of a system privileging Israeli settlements and settlers against the Palestinian people, and in violation of their human rights,

Recalling the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which place responsibilities on all business enterprises to respect human rights by, inter alia, refraining from contributing to human rights abuses arising from conflict, and calling upon States to take appropriate steps to prevent, investigate, punish and redress human rights abuses through effective policies, legislation, regulations and adjudication, including by providing adequate assistance to business enterprises to assess and address the heightened risks of abuses in conflict-affected areas and ensuring that their current policies, legislation, regulations and enforcement measures are effective in addressing the risk of business involvement in gross human rights abuses,

Noting that, in situations of armed conflict, business enterprises should respect the standards of international humanitarian law, and concerned that some business enterprises have, directly and indirectly, enabled, facilitated and profited from the construction and growth of the Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,

Emphasizing the importance for States to act in accordance with their own national legislation on promoting compliance with international humanitarian law with regard to business activities that result in human rights abuses,

Concerned that economic activities, including the production and trade of settlement goods, facilitate the expansion and entrenchment of settlements, thus strengthening and perpetuating the Israeli occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Aware that the conditions of harvesting and production of products made in settlements involve the breach of applicable legal norms, including international humanitarian law, human rights, permanent sovereignty over natural resources and the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, and calling upon all States to respect their legal obligations in this regard, including the obligation to ensure respect for the Fourth Geneva Convention,

Aware also that products wholly or partially produced in settlements have been labelled as originating from Israel, and concerned about the significant role that the production and trade of such products plays in helping to support and maintain the settlements,

Recognizing that States permitting the entry of settlement products into their markets risk rendering aid or assistance in maintaining the illegal situation created by the presence of the settlements and contributing to the economic prosperity and growth of the settlements, to the extraction of natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to the denial of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination,

Aware of the role of private individuals, associations and charities in third States that are involved in providing funding to Israeli settlements and settlement-based entities, contributing to the maintenance and expansion of settlements, thereby contributing to the economic incentive structure perpetuating the occupation and its illegal manifestations throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Welcoming the fact that a number of business enterprises have decided to disengage from relationships or activities associated with the Israeli settlements owing to the risks involved,

Expressing its concern at the failure of Israel, the occupying Power, to cooperate fully with the relevant United Nations mechanisms, in particular the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967,

1. *Reaffirms* that the Israeli settlements established since 1967 in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan are illegal under international law, and constitute a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, and to economic and social development;

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

3. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, immediately cease all settlement activities, without preconditions, in all the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and in this regard calls for the full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions, including, inter alia, resolutions 446 (1979) of 22 March 1979, 452 (1979) of 20 July 1979, 465 (1980) of 1 March 1980, 476 (1980) of 30 June 1980, 497 (1981) of 17 December 1981, 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003 and 2334 (2016) of 23 December 2016;

4. *Also demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, comply fully with its legal obligations, as mentioned in the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice, including to cease forthwith the works of construction of the wall being built in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, to dismantle forthwith the structure therein situated, to repeal or render ineffective forthwith all legislative and regulatory acts relating thereto, and to make reparation for the damage caused to all natural or legal persons affected by the construction of the wall;

5. *Condemns* the continuing settlement and related activities by Israel, including the transfer of its nationals into the occupied territory, the construction and expansion of settlements, the expropriation and de facto annexation of land, the demolition of homes and community infrastructure, disruptions to the livelihood of protected persons, the confiscation and destruction of property, including humanitarian relief consignments, the forcible transfer of Palestinian civilians or the threat thereof, including of entire communities, and the construction of bypass roads, which change the physical character and demographic composition of the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan, constitute a violation of international humanitarian law, in particular article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and of international human rights law, and undermine the viability of the two-State solution;

6. *Expresses its grave concern* at and calls for the cessation of:

(a) The conduct of economic activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, for the benefit of the settlement enterprise and associated activities;

(b) The expropriation of Palestinian land, the demolition of Palestinian homes, demolition orders, forcible transfer and “relocation” plans, the obstruction and destruction of humanitarian assistance, including projects funded by the international community, and the creation by Israel of a coercive environment and unbearable living conditions in areas identified for the expansion and construction of settlements, and other practices aimed at the forcible transfer of the Palestinian civilian population, including Bedouin communities and herders, and further settlement activities, including the denial of access to water and other basic services by Israel to Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly in areas slated for settlement expansion, and including the appropriation of Palestinian property through, inter alia, the declaration of “State lands”, closed “military zones”, “national parks” and “archaeological sites” to facilitate and advance the expansion or construction of settlements and related infrastructure, in violation of the obligations of Israel under international humanitarian law and international human rights law;

(c) Israeli measures in the form of policies, laws and practices that have the effect of preventing the full participation of Palestinians in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and prevent their full development in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip;

7. Calls upon Israel, the occupying Power:

(a) To end without delay its occupation of the territories occupied since 1967, to reverse and redress the settlement policy in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan, to dismantle the settlement enterprise, including, as a first step, by immediately stopping the establishment of new settlements and the expansion of existing settlements, including so-called natural growth and related activities, and to discard any and all plans to install settlers in the occupied territories, including in East Jerusalem;

(b) To put an end to all of the human rights violations linked to the presence of settlements, especially of the right to self-determination and non-discrimination and to fulfil its international obligations to provide adequate, effective and prompt remedy and reparations for victims;

(c) To take immediate measures to prohibit and eradicate all policies and practices that discriminate against and disproportionately affect the Palestinian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, by, inter alia, putting an end to the system of segregated roads for the exclusive use of Israeli settlers, who reside illegally in the said territory, the complex combination of movement restrictions consisting of the wall, roadblocks and a permit regime that only affects the Palestinian population, the application of a two-tier legal system that has facilitated the establishment and consolidation of the settlements and other violations and forms of institutionalized discrimination;

(d) To cease the requisition and all other forms of unlawful appropriation of Palestinian land, including so-called State land, and its allocation for the establishment and expansion of settlements, and to halt the granting of benefits and incentives to settlements and settlers;

(e) To put an end to all practices and policies resulting in the territorial fragmentation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which are isolating Palestinian communities into segregated enclaves and deliberately changing the demographic composition of the Occupied Palestinian Territory;

(f) To take and implement serious measures, including the confiscation of arms and enforcement of criminal sanctions, with the aim of ensuring full accountability for and preventing all acts of violence by

Israeli settlers, to take other measures to guarantee the safety and protection of Palestinian civilians and Palestinian properties and to afford all victims of settler violence access to justice and effective remedy without discrimination in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

(g) To bring to a halt all actions, including those perpetrated by Israeli settlers, harming the environment, including the dumping of all kinds of waste materials in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, which gravely threaten their natural resources, namely water and land resources, and which pose an environmental, sanitation and health threat to the civilian population;

(h) To cease the exploitation, damage, cause of loss or depletion and endangerment of the natural resources of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the occupied Syrian Golan;

8. *Welcomes* the adoption of the European Union guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the European Union since 2014;

9. *Urges* all States and international organizations to ensure that they are not taking actions that recognize, aid or assist the expansion of settlements or the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to continue to actively pursue policies that ensure respect for their obligations under international law with regard to these and all other illegal Israeli practices and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

10. *Reminds* all States of their legal obligations as mentioned in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 9 July 2004 on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including not to recognize the illegal situation resulting from the construction of the wall, not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by such construction, and to ensure compliance by Israel with international humanitarian law as embodied in the Fourth Geneva Convention;

11. *Calls upon* all States:

(a) To distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967, and not to provide Israel with any assistance to be used specifically in connection with settlements in these territories, including by taking steps towards ceasing the importation of any products originating in settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, consistent with their obligations under international law;

(b) To implement the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in relation to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to take appropriate steps to prevent, investigate, punish and redress human rights abuses by businesses domiciled in their territory and/or under their jurisdiction, including those owned or controlled by them, through effective policies, legislation, regulations and adjudication in order to ensure that those businesses refrain from committing, contributing to, enabling or benefiting from the human rights abuses of Palestinians, in accordance with the expected standard of conduct in the Guiding Principles and relevant international laws and standards, by taking appropriate steps in view of the immitigable nature of the adverse impact of their activities on human rights, including suspension of their operations in the context of the settlements;

(c) To provide guidance to individuals and businesses on the financial, reputational and legal risks, including the possibility of liability for corporate involvement in gross human rights abuses and the abuses of the rights of individuals, of becoming involved in settlement-related activities, including through

financial transactions, including foreign direct investments, purchases, the importation of settlement products, procurements, loans, the provision of services and other economic and financial activities in or benefiting Israeli settlements, from within their countries, to prevent those financial transactions, to inform businesses of those risks in the formulation of their national action plans for the implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and to ensure that their policies, legislation, regulations and enforcement measures effectively address the heightened risks of operating a business in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

(d) To increase monitoring of settler violence with a view to promoting accountability, and to take steps towards implementing targeted individual sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes, against individuals identified as perpetrators of violations of international human rights law or international humanitarian law;

12. *Calls upon* business enterprises to take all measures necessary to comply with their responsibilities under the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and relevant international laws and standards, foremost by terminating their activities in or in relation to the Israeli settlements and the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, to withdraw from settlements in order to cease the unmitigable adverse impact of their activities on human rights, and to cease contributing to the establishment, maintenance, development or consolidation of Israeli settlements or the exploitation of the natural resources of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

13. *Calls upon* relevant United Nations bodies to take all measures and actions within their mandates necessary to ensure full respect for and compliance with Human Rights Council resolution 17/4 of 16 June 2011 on the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and other relevant international laws and standards and to ensure the implementation of the United Nations “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework, which provides a global standard for upholding human rights in relation to business activities that are connected with Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

14. *Requests* the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel to prepare a report on the identities of settlers, as well as settler groups and their members, that have engaged in or continue to engage in acts of, violence, intimidation, harassment or terror against Palestinian civilians and the actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, and by third States to ensure accountability for violations or abuses of international law in this regard, and to present the report to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-ninth session;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to allocate the resources necessary to prepare the requested report;

16. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to report on the implementation of the provisions of the present resolution to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-eighth session;

17. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

*56th meeting
5 April 2024*

[Adopted by a recorded vote of 36 to 3, with 8 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Algeria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Burundi, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Eritrea, Finland, France, Gambia, Ghana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Qatar, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam

Against:

Malawi, Paraguay, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Argentina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Georgia, Germany, Lithuania, Romania]

VI. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator says, six months on, the war in Gaza is a betrayal of humanity

On 6 April, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths issued the following [statement](#).

We have arrived at a terrible milestone. For the people of Gaza, the past six months of war have brought death, devastation and now the immediate prospect of a shameful man-made famine. For the people affected by the lasting horror of the 7 October attacks, it has been six months of grief and torment.

Each day, this war claims more civilian victims. Every second that it continues sows the seeds of a future so deeply obscured by this relentless conflict. As I and many others have said repeatedly, the end of this war is so long overdue.

Instead, we face the unconscionable prospect of further escalation in Gaza, where no one is safe and there is nowhere safe to go. An already fragile aid operation continues to be undermined by bombardments, insecurity and denials of access. Rarely has there been such global outrage at the toll of conflict, with seemingly so little done to end it and instead so much impunity.

On this day, my heart goes out to the families of those killed, injured or taken hostage, and to those who face the particular suffering of not knowing the plight of their loved ones. It is not enough for six months of war to be a moment of remembrance and mourning – it must also spur a collective determination that there be a reckoning for this betrayal of humanity.

VII. Security Council expressed grave concern over the Israeli air strikes that killed 7 humanitarian workers of World Central Kitchen

On 11 April, the Security Council issued the following [press statement](#).

The following Security Council press statement was issued today by Council President Vanessa Frazier (Malta):

The members of the Security Council expressed grave concern over the Israeli air strikes that killed seven team members of the World Central Kitchen. These horrific attacks brought the number of humanitarian personnel killed in Gaza during the ongoing conflict to at least 224, more than three times as many humanitarian aid workers killed in any single conflict recorded in a single year. The members of the Security Council underlined the need for accountability for all of these incidents and noted that Israel has announced the initial results of an investigation into the incident of 1 April 2024. They stressed the need for a full, transparent and comprehensive investigation into the incident, that is fully publicized.

The members of the Security Council expressed sincere condolences to the relatives and friends of all who had lost their lives since the start of hostilities on 7 October 2023.

The members of the Security Council also demanded that all parties to the conflict fully respect the protected status of humanitarian workers, facilities, and operations under international law, abide by humanitarian notification and deconfliction mechanisms, and immediately remediate any deficiencies in these mechanisms.

The members of the Security Council recognized the outstanding and admirable efforts of all humanitarian, medical and United Nations workers serving in Gaza and acknowledged the extremely difficult and dangerous conditions under which they are operating, as well as the tremendous courage they continued to demonstrate in pursuing their lifesaving mission.

The members of the Security Council reiterated their deep concern over the human toll of the conflict, the catastrophic humanitarian situation, and the threat of imminent famine in Gaza and called for the immediate lifting of all barriers to the delivery of humanitarian aid at scale to the civilian population and to the unhindered distribution of such assistance. They took note of the announcement by Israel to open the Erez crossing and allow the use of the Ashdod port for aid deliveries into Gaza, but stressed that more should be done to bring the required relief given the scale of needs in Gaza. Council members insisted on the need to immediately and fully implement this decision in a sustained manner, and reiterated their demand to the parties to allow, facilitate and enable the immediate, safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale directly to the Palestinian civilian population throughout the Gaza Strip, consistent with resolution 2720 (2023).

The members of the Security Council called for full respect of international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. They underlined their demands for an immediate ceasefire for the month of Ramadan respected by all parties leading to a lasting sustainable ceasefire, and for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, as well as ensuring humanitarian access to address their medical and other humanitarian needs, and for the parties to comply with their obligations under international law in relation to all persons they detain, in line with resolution 2728 (2024).

The members of the Security Council further reiterated their full support for the work of Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza, in line with resolution 2720 (2023). They also underlined their support for the lifesaving efforts of all UN personnel and agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), that are working to deliver humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza.

The members of the Security Council condemned all violence and hostilities against civilians, and all acts of terrorism. They emphasized the imperative of all parties immediately and fully implementing resolutions 2728 (2024), 2720 and 2712 (2023).

VIII. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk urges all States to act over crises in Gaza, West Bank

On 16 April, Ravina Shamdasani, the spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk issued the following [press briefing note](#):

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk urges all States with influence to do everything in their power to halt the increasingly horrific human rights and humanitarian crisis in Gaza, rising violence and targeted attacks in the West Bank, and the heightened risk of wider escalation of conflict in the Middle East.

Resolving the catastrophic situation of civilians in Gaza must remain a priority.

Israel continues to impose unlawful restrictions on the entry and distribution of humanitarian assistance, and to carry out widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure. The High Commissioner repeats that there must be an immediate ceasefire, the hostages must be released, and full, unfettered humanitarian aid must be allowed to flow immediately. Those delivering or trying to access humanitarian assistance must never be attacked.

No area of the Gaza Strip has been spared from Israel's bombardment. Nearly 1.7 million people remain forcibly displaced, living in appalling conditions and under constant threat. In the past week alone, fighting has intensified in Middle Gaza leading to the displacement of some 10,000 people from in and around An Nuseirat camp and near Wadi Gaza. We have also received reports that during Eid al-Fitr last week, the Israel Defence Forces attacked at least eight mosques in An Nuseirat and Gaza City and struck a further three on 14 April. Since October 2023, 534 mosques have been destroyed or damaged according to the Gaza Government Media Office. Places of worship are protected under the laws of war.

On 14 April, Israeli Defense Forces reportedly opened fire on a group of Palestinians on Al Rashid Road who were attempting to return to their homes in northern Gaza, killing at least one Palestinian woman and injuring at least 11 others. Intentional targeting and killing of civilians is a war crime.

In the West Bank, escalating violence over the past few days is also a matter of grave concern. Palestinians have been subjected to waves of attacks by hundreds of Israeli settlers, often accompanied or supported by Israeli Security Forces (ISF). Following the killing of a 14-year-old Israeli boy from a settler family, four Palestinians, including a child, were killed and Palestinian property was destroyed in revenge attacks.

According to information received by the UN Human Rights Office, armed settlers and Israeli forces entered a number of towns including Al Mughayyer, Khirbit Abu Falah, Kufer Malilk, Al Mazra'a Asharqiya, Beitin village in Ramallah, Duma and Qusra in Nablus, as well as the Bethlehem and Hebron Governorates. Dozens of Palestinians were reportedly injured, including through the use of firearms, by settlers and ISF, and hundreds of homes and other buildings, as well as cars, were torched. Three Israeli soldiers suffered injuries after they were hit with stones. It was also reported that settlers established at least two new outposts in the past two days in the Jordan Valley and South Hebron Hills, near Palestinian communities which have been repeatedly attacked by settlers in the past months and are at imminent risk of being forcibly transferred from their homes and land.

Israel, as the occupying power, must take all measures in its power to restore, and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety in the occupied West Bank. This obligation includes protecting Palestinians from settler attacks, and ending unlawful use of force against Palestinians by the ISF.

The Israeli Security Forces must immediately end their active participation in and support for settler attacks on Palestinians. Israeli authorities must instead prevent further attacks, including by bringing those responsible to account. Those reasonably suspected of criminal acts, including murder or other unlawful killings, must be brought to justice through a judicial process that complies with international human rights standards, following a prompt, impartial, independent, effective and transparent investigation.

Neither Palestinians nor Israelis should take the law into their own hands to exact revenge.

IX. UNICEF Executive Director visits the Middle East, stresses that children always pay the highest price of war

On 16 April, UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell issued the following [statement](#).

Today I completed a two-day visit to the Middle East, where escalating violence continues to take an unconscionable toll on the lives of children.

On the first day in Israel, I met with some of the many Israeli families who experienced unspeakable violence on 7 October, including children taken hostage, the killing of loved ones, and the loss of homes and communities.

A relative of the two remaining Israeli children held hostage in Gaza, 4-year-old Ariel and his one-year-old brother, Kfir, told me that he just wants them back, along with their mother and father. ‘We love them so much.’

Family members of released child hostages told me of the horror of being held captive, not knowing what tomorrow would bring. Six months later, families of Israeli hostages do not know the fate of their loved ones still in Gaza – making healing or recovery impossible.

The staff at the Schneider Children’s Medical Center in Petach-Tikvah, where some of the Israeli child hostages were cared for after their release in November, told me that it would be a long road to recovery for the children to feel safe again.

I also had constructive meetings with Israeli officials, including on the horrific humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the urgent need to ensure better access. I welcomed their assurance that humanitarian workers will have better access to the children who are in desperate need. We look forward to the critical implementation of this assurance, along with security for aid workers and the children they serve.

On my second day, I visited the State of Palestine, where I met with families and officials in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. I heard distressing accounts from families and children about fear and violence that has long permeated their lives and has significantly escalated in the past six months. This year alone, 37 Palestinian children and two Israeli children have been killed in the violence.

I met children who are challenged by barriers and checkpoints every day when they go to school. I also spoke with a young boy who was first detained by authorities when he was 11. His brother is now being detained and the family does not know his location.

I visited Al Makassed hospital in East Jerusalem, where I met baby triplets Noor, Najwa and Nejma. Doctors told me that their mother came to the hospital from Gaza eight months ago to give birth, and the babies were so small they needed an incubator and special medical care to survive. Their mother had to go back to Gaza, but then war broke out and she has been unable to return. She fears she could die before seeing them again.

At the same time, in the Gaza Strip, more than 13,800 children have reportedly been killed, while thousands have been injured and thousands more are on the brink of famine.

Our staff at UNICEF have not been spared by the violence. Many of our colleagues have lost family, friends and homes in Gaza. Over 200 humanitarian workers have been killed trying to save the lives of others.

Children do not start wars, and they cannot end them, but they always pay the highest price. For the sake of every child, I urge the parties to the conflict to release all Israeli hostages, implement an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and facilitate unfettered humanitarian access, and refrain from any further violence against children.

The last few days were a reminder that hostilities can quickly spread through the region. As always, children suffer immensely in war. Each of us has an obligation to do everything in our power to protect the lives of children.

X. Secretary-General reiterates his calls for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and the immediate release of all hostages held in Gaza during Security Council Ministerial level open debate

On 18 April, Secretary-General António Guterres made the following [statement](#) at the Security Council's meeting on the Middle East situation including the Palestinian question.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

The Middle East is on a precipice. Recent days have seen a perilous escalation – in words and deeds. One miscalculation, one miscommunication, one mistake, could lead to the unthinkable – a full-scale regional conflict that would be devastating for all involved – and for the rest of the world. This moment of maximum peril must be a time for maximum restraint.

I reiterate my strong condemnation of the serious escalation represented by the large-scale attack launched by the Islamic Republic of Iran on Israel on 13 April. The use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations, is prohibited by the Charter.

And – as I stated earlier this month when I condemned the attack on the Iranian consulate in Damascus – the principle of inviolability of diplomatic and consular premises and personnel must be respected in all cases, in accordance with international law.

It is high time to end the bloody cycle of retaliation. It is high time to stop. The international community must work together to prevent any actions that could push the entire Middle East over the edge, with a devastating impact on civilians.

Let me be clear: the risks are spiralling on many fronts. We have a shared responsibility to address those risks and pull the region back from the precipice. The way to do so is by advancing comprehensive diplomatic action for de-escalation in the Middle East.

Mr. President,

It starts with Gaza. Ending the hostilities in Gaza would significantly defuse tensions across the region. I reiterate my calls for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and the immediate release of all hostages held in Gaza.

The horrific terror attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups on 7 October, including mass killings, the use of sexual violence, torture, and the taking of hostages, were an intolerable denial of the most basic values of humanity, and a breach of the most fundamental rules of international law.

In Gaza, six and a half months of Israeli military operations have created a humanitarian hellscape. Tens of thousands of people have been killed. Two million Palestinians have endured death, destruction, and the denial of lifesaving humanitarian aid; they are now staring down on starvation. An Israeli operation in Rafah would compound this humanitarian catastrophe.

The casualty figures are overwhelming and unprecedented in speed and scale during my time as Secretary-General. According to UNICEF, more than 13,900 Palestinian children have reportedly been killed in intense, often indiscriminate attacks.

All this has happened with severe limitations imposed by the Israeli authorities on the delivery of humanitarian aid to people in Gaza, who are facing widespread starvation.

Israel recently made a number of commitments to improve aid delivery – and there have been some examples of limited progress. Three WFP convoys with a total of 25 trucks were authorized to use the Erez Crossing in northern Gaza on 14, 15 and 16 April, to deliver food parcels and wheat flour. The operating hours of Kerem Shalom and Nitsana crossings have been expanded from the Israeli side. But security concerns mean the hours could not be expanded to the same extent on the Gaza side. Some bakeries have resumed operations in northern and central Gaza – the first to reopen in months.

But apparent progress in one area is often cancelled out by delays and restrictions elsewhere. For example, although the Israeli authorities have cleared more aid convoys, those clearances are often granted when it is too late in the day to make deliveries and return safely. One can say that our personnel cannot operate in darkness in a war zone littered with unexploded ordnance.

So the impact is limited, and sometimes nil. The clearances increase, but there are continued obstacles to aid for people who are in desperate need. During the week of 6-12 April, Israel denied more than 40 percent of UN requests that required passing through Israeli checkpoints.

We urgently need meaningful, measurable progress, including, for example, the unrestricted delivery of aid via Ashdod port and the restarting of the Nahal Oz water line.

To avert imminent famine, and further preventable deaths from disease, we need a quantum leap in humanitarian aid to Palestinians in Gaza. Food is essential; so are clean water, sanitation, and healthcare. This means addressing the challenges impeding delivery on the ground.

Humanitarian agencies, led by UNRWA which is the backbone of our operations, must be able to move food and other supplies safely and via all possible routes and crossings, into and throughout every part of Gaza. That requires improved delivery systems around all supply routes and entry points.

Humanitarians also need security. Nearly 250 aid workers, including more than 180 of our own staff, have been killed in Gaza; I repeat my call for thorough investigations into these tragic deaths.

Just last week, a UNICEF vehicle travelling with a convoy was caught in crossfire. Delivering aid at scale requires Israel's full and active facilitation of humanitarian operations, including through a functioning humanitarian notification system – and improved and direct communications between humanitarians and military decisionmakers on the ground.

This is essential and must be implemented immediately. For the moment, our aid operations face enormous difficulties and are barely functional. They cannot operate in an organized, systematic way; they can only seize opportunities to deliver aid whenever and wherever possible.

And humanitarians alone cannot address the enormity of the needs in Gaza. The private sector is critical. Increasing commercial traffic is essential.

What is needed is clear: an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza; the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages; and the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid.

The international community has a shared responsibility to do everything possible to make this happen.

Mr. President,

A comprehensive de-escalation approach must also reverse the explosive situation in the occupied West Bank.

More than 450 Palestinians, including 112 children, have been killed in the occupied West Bank since 7 October – the majority by Israeli forces in the course of their operations, and in exchanges between Israeli forces and armed Palestinians.

Others were killed by armed Israeli settlers, sometimes in the presence of Israeli security forces who reportedly stood by and did nothing to prevent these killings.

Last year saw the highest number of such attacks, and incidents of violence and intimidation against Palestinian communities, since the United Nations began recording them in 2006.

Seventeen Israelis, including one child, have also been killed in the occupied West Bank and Israel since 7 October.

In addition to this number, the reported killing of a 14-year-old Israeli boy over the weekend set off another wave of armed settler attacks against at least 37 Palestinian villages in the occupied West Bank. Four Palestinians were killed, including a 17-year-old boy.

I condemn all violence against civilians. I urge Israel to take immediate steps to end the unprecedented levels of settler violence, and to hold accountable those who have perpetrated such attacks.

And I call on Israel, as the occupying Power, to protect the Palestinian population of the occupied West Bank against attacks, violence and intimidation.

The backdrop to this appalling surge in violence is the continued expansion of Israeli settlements – in themselves a violation of international law – and repeated large-scale Israeli operations in Palestinian areas.

Declarations that areas now constitute Israeli State land, together with legal decisions that strengthen settlements and potentially increase demolitions and evictions, risk undermining the contiguity of a future Palestinian state and deny hope to a generation of Palestinians.

Israel and the international community must support and work with the new Palestinian Government to address its fiscal challenges, strengthening its governance capacity, and prepare it to reassume its responsibilities in Gaza in the future.

I urge all actors to recognize the critical role the Palestinian Authority should play in Gaza and work toward enabling its return [at] the appropriate time.

Mr. President,

The ultimate goal remains a two-state solution – Israel and Palestine living side-by-side in peace and security, with Jerusalem as the capital of both states, on the basis of UN resolutions, international law and previous agreements.

This means an end to the occupation and the establishment of a fully independent, democratic, contiguous, viable and sovereign Palestinian State, with Gaza as an integral part.

The international community has a responsibility and a moral obligation to help make this happen.

Mr. President,

Regional de-escalation efforts must also address the extremely fraught situation in Lebanon, particularly along the Blue Line.

Exchanges of fire between Israeli forces and Hizbullah are exacting a mounting toll on civilian communities in Israel and Lebanon. Dozens of civilians have been killed and tens of thousands displaced on both sides of the Blue Line.

These exchanges could take on a momentum of their own. Strikes deep into the territories of Lebanon and Israel could ignite an even more serious confrontation – as we have seen in the past.

I call on all parties to exercise maximum restraint and avoid further breaches of the cessation of hostilities under the framework of resolution 1701.

The United Nations stands ready to support the efforts of several countries to encourage de-escalation and to work towards a diplomatic solution.

Mr. President,

Regional de-escalation efforts must also ensure the safety of navigation on the Red Sea, respecting the rights and duties relating to maritime navigation in accordance with international law.

Houthi attacks on merchant and commercial shipping continue to disrupt global trade. They have been met with strikes by the United States and the United Kingdom.

Armed confrontations on this crucial waterway increase risks across the board: risks to supply chains; risks of an environmental disaster from a damaged cargo ship or oil tanker; risks of a serious escalation and a confrontation between major powers, with appalling political, security, economic and humanitarian repercussions.

All attacks on merchant and commercial shipping on the Red Sea must end immediately.

The international community must act together to prevent escalation in the Red Sea that would exacerbate tensions and undermine regional peace and security and international trade.

The people of Yemen must be supported towards a political process for a sustainable and just peace.

Mr. President,

The Middle East is on a knife-edge.

Recent escalations make it even more important to support good-faith efforts to find lasting peace between Israel and a fully independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian state.

Failure to make progress towards a two-State solution will only increase volatility and risk for hundreds of millions of people across the region, who will continue to live under the constant threat of violence.

I urge every Government involved to use its influence and leverage to promote trust-building, mutual security, and regional peace.

We have a shared moral obligation to advance a comprehensive Middle East de-escalation effort, in order to reduce risks, increase stability, and pave the way towards peace and prosperity for the countries and people of the region and beyond.

Thank you.

XI. Chair of the Palestinian Rights Committee addresses Security Council open debate

On 18 April, the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) Amb. Cheikh Niang made the following [statement](#).

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Malta for assuming the April presidency of the Security Council. I join previous speakers in thanking Malta for convening this meeting at ministerial level, elevating the Council's attention to the gravity of the prevailing crisis.

I also extend my gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Antonio Guterres, for his briefing and tireless efforts toward achieving a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

Distinguished Council members,

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People rejects linking the origin of the current crisis solely to the abhorrent attacks of 7 October 2023 inside Israel. The historical context, spanning over 76 years on the UN agenda, helps to understand the illegal Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory including East Jerusalem, decades of documented human rights violations, grave breaches of international humanitarian law, and seventeen years of blockade of the Gaza Strip. Addressing such issues is essential for a just and lasting resolution to the question of Palestine, including the current catastrophic crisis in Gaza.

Our Committee welcomed the Security Council's belated adoption of resolution 2728 (2024) demanding, inter alia, an immediate ceasefire during the month of Ramadan leading to a lasting, sustainable ceasefire.

However, the Committee deeply regrets that the resolution was not implemented. Ramadan is over, and thousands of Palestinian civilians continue to being killed and maimed. This must stop.

Israel's war in Gaza has resulted in high civilian deaths among Palestinians, extensive displacement, denial of food and medicine as a weapon, plausible genocide, and consistent violations of international law, including disregarding ICJ orders. Blatant disrespect for international law undermines the UN and its authority, eroding the multilateral system and the Council's standing.

In six months of this horrific war, the occupying Power's military operations have killed over 33,000 Palestinians and injured over 76,000, mostly women and children. Deliberate obstruction of humanitarian aid has plunged 1.1 million civilians into starvation, disease, and death. Gaza is today victim of an openly admitted human-made famine.

At the same time, Israel's occupying forces and armed settlers continue to inflict violence and dispossession to the Palestinian population in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Since the start of 2024, according to the Israeli organization Peace Now, Israel's confiscation of Palestinian land and settlement expansion has grown massively compared to previous years. Israel's illegal settlement activities and its illegal occupation must cease.

Distinguished Council members,

The Committee commends the UN, Member States, and NGOs for aid efforts in Gaza, while condemning Israeli deliberate attacks on humanitarian workers and infrastructure. We note the disparity in attention devoted to these incidents, including the killing of 178 UNRWA and other staff, and the equally horrendous World Central Kitchen staff tragedy.

We continue to demand unrestricted humanitarian access in Gaza. We also demand a stop to the targeting of journalists – over 150 of them have been killed in Israeli attacks. Moreover, the international press must be allowed access to Gaza.

The Committee strongly denounces Israel's persistent efforts to undermine UNRWA, the only entity with the capacity to address the needs of civilians in Gaza. The Committee opposes any attempts to shift the status of Palestinian refugees as per General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 1948.

We must not let UNRWA collapse, as the ramifications go beyond mere humanitarian concerns. It would threaten to ignite new flames of tension and conflict in an already volatile region. The Committee

urges donors to promptly resume funding UNRWA and to support the full implementation of its General Assembly mandate.

The Committee welcomes the UN Human Rights Council resolutions of 5 April urging, among other measures, to prevent forced transfers of Palestinians and halt arms sales to Israel.

We acknowledge efforts by Egypt, Qatar, and the United States towards achieving a permanent and sustainable ceasefire and the release of all hostages and hope for an agreement.

We must strive for peace in Gaza to prevent escalating conflicts that threaten global security. The Committee urgently calls for an immediate halt to Israel-Iran escalation, emphasizing adherence by all to the UN Charter's principles.

The Committee urges the Security Council and Member States to support the State of Palestine's application for UN membership. This crucial step will support the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the realization of the two-State solution. We salute the ongoing efforts of the European Union countries planning to join the 140 Member States who already recognize the State of Palestine.

We welcome the appointment of a new Prime Minister to lead the Government of Palestine to help streamline recovery and reconstruction efforts.

I conclude with a plea to all Member States, including Council members, to heed the calls of the General Assembly as well as civil society, civil servants, and citizens throughout the world who are clamouring daily for an end to the carnage in Gaza, accountability for egregious crimes committed by all parties, and for vigorous efforts to achieve a just, lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

XII. UN Security Council fails to recommend UN membership for State of Palestine due to US veto

Below is the text of draft resolution ([S/2024/312](#)) which was not adopted by the Security Council during its meeting that took place on 18 April due to a negative vote cast by a Permanent Member (United States).

Algeria: draft resolution

The Security Council,

Having examined the application of the State of Palestine for admission to the United Nations ([S/2011/592](#)),

Recommends to the General Assembly that the State of Palestine be admitted to membership in the United Nations.

XIII. Independent Review Group on UNRWA neutrality issues final report

On 20 April, the Independent Review Group on UNRWA led by Catherine Colonna, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of France, issued its the final report. The [executive summary](#) of the report is reproduced below.

An Independent Review Group on the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was appointed by the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, in consultation with the UNRWA Commissioner-General, on 5 February 2024. The Group was created to assess whether UNRWA is doing everything within its power to ensure neutrality and respond to allegations of serious neutrality breaches when they are made, taking into account the [...] context in which it has to work, especially in Gaza, and to make recommendations for UNRWA to improve and strengthen in this area, if necessary. This followed allegations made by the Government of Israel in January 2024 that some UNRWA staff may have participated in the 7 October 2023 terror attacks on Israel. The UN Secretary-General also activated a separate investigation by the UN's Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to determine the veracity of these allegations, which, if proven true, would be horrifying in addition to being a grave violation of their obligations towards the Organization.

In the days and weeks after the allegations, 16 Member State donors suspended or paused funding, and others indicated conditionality. Overall, the suspension of funding amounted to around US\$450 million. Based on initiatives already taken by UNRWA, a number of Member States have since resumed funding. However, Member States requested more information on what had occurred as well as reinforcement of UNRWA's existing neutrality mechanisms and procedures, including staff vetting and oversight.

The Review Group commenced its work on 13 February 2024. Led by Ms. Catherine Colonna, the Group included three research organizations, namely the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in Sweden, the Chr. Michelsen Institute in Norway, and the Danish Institute for Human Rights. Throughout the nine-week review, the Group extensively analysed the mechanisms and procedures currently in place within UNRWA to ensure neutrality and address potential breaches. The Group's members conducted field visits to UNRWA headquarters and facilities in Amman, Jerusalem and the West Bank, engaging with various stakeholders including UNRWA officials, donor Member States, host countries, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Egypt, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Group conducted meetings and interviews with more than 200 people, including with UNRWA staff in Gaza. Direct contacts were made with 47 countries and organizations.

The three institutes submitted their research to the Secretary-General through his Chef de Cabinet and to the Chair. The present document, which constitutes the final review report, is presented under the responsibility of the Chair. Situating the review, it is significant that UNRWA continuously operates amid recurring conflicts, violence, a lack of political progress, poor socioeconomic conditions and the proliferation of armed groups. In Gaza in particular, Hamas, the de facto ruling entity until October 2023, is designated as a terrorist organization by major donors such as the United States and the European Union (EU), while other factions also actively oppose the Palestinian Authority. UNRWA's neutrality challenges differ from those of other international organizations due to the magnitude of its operations, with most personnel being locally recruited and recipients of UNRWA services. In the absence of a political solution between Israel and the Palestinians, UNRWA remains pivotal in providing life-saving humanitarian aid and essential social services, particularly in health and education, to Palestinian refugees in Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the West Bank. As such, UNRWA is irreplaceable and indispensable to Palestinians' human and economic development. In addition, many view UNRWA as a humanitarian lifeline.

As a UN agency, UNRWA and its staff and personnel have a fundamental obligation to maintain neutrality to ensure the integrity of the agency's mission and the effectiveness of its operations. Neutrality is a UN commitment as one of the four humanitarian principles formally adopted by the General Assembly and upheld by other UN agencies while operating in humanitarian settings. It means that humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature. Despite significant investment and efforts, UNRWA's neutrality has been consistently questioned by Palestinian and Israeli stakeholders. In the past, several allegations of neutrality breaches

have taken place and disciplinary measures were taken, but allegations of neutrality breaches were never as serious as the ones that surfaced in January 2024.

The Review revealed that UNRWA has established a significant number of mechanisms and procedures to ensure compliance with the humanitarian principles, with emphasis on the principle of neutrality, and that it possesses a more developed approach to neutrality than other similar UN or NGO entities. The UNRWA Neutrality Framework was established in 2017 “to serve as a repository of existing standards, practices and procedures with regard to neutrality and to introduce new standards and procedures.” The framework aims to “ensure a consistent and coherent approach, agency-wide, to key issues relating to the neutrality of UNRWA operations.” The Framework covers substantive areas including the neutrality of UNRWA staff and other personnel, including their use of social media; neutrality of UNRWA installations; neutrality of UNRWA assets, particularly vehicles; and other areas in relation to UNRWA operations, including donors, partners and agency assistance. Obligations for the agency’s staff are set out clearly in the International Staff Regulations and the Area Staff Regulations dated 1 January 2018. Despite this robust framework, neutrality-related issues persist. They include instances of staff publicly expressing political views, host-country textbooks with problematic content being used in some UNRWA schools, and politicized staff unions making threats against UNRWA management and causing operational disruptions. The Review identified several measures to help UNRWA address its neutrality challenges in eight critical areas requiring immediate improvement:

- Engagement with donors
- Governance
- Management and internal oversight structures
- Neutrality of staff and behaviour
- Neutrality of installations
- Neutrality of education
- Neutrality of staff unions
- Strengthened partnership with UN agencies.

The measures identified in each critical area are designed to help UNRWA face the neutrality challenges stemming from the operational, political and security environment in which it operates. Given the uniqueness of this political context, these measures will have a significant impact only with the support of host countries, Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

XIV. UN Human Rights High Commissioner deplores harrowing killings of children and women in Rafah

On 23 April, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk made the following [statement](#).

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk today decried a series of Israeli strikes on Rafah in the past few days that killed mostly children and women, repeating his warning against a full-scale incursion on an area where 1.2 million civilians have been forcibly cornered.

Such an operation would lead to further breaches of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, he said. It would risk more deaths, injuries and displacement on a large scale – even further atrocity crimes, for which those responsible would be held accountable. Already in March, the Security Council had demanded an immediate ceasefire.

“The world’s leaders stand united on the imperative of protecting the civilian population trapped in Rafah,” the High Commissioner said.

“The latest images of a premature child taken from the womb of her dying mother, of the adjacent two houses where 15 children and five women were killed – this is beyond warfare.”

On 19 April, an apartment building was hit in Tal Al Sultan area in Rafah, killing nine Palestinians, including six children and two women. Another strike on two adjacent houses in At Tanour area in eastern Rafah on 20 April reportedly killed 20 Palestinians – 15 children and five women. A strike on As Shabora Camp in Rafah on the same day reportedly left four dead, including a girl and a pregnant woman.

As of 22 April, according to the authorities in Gaza, of the 34,151 Palestinians killed in Gaza, 14,685 have been children and 9,670 women. Another 77,084 have been injured, and over 7,000 others are assumed to be under the rubble.

“Every 10 minutes a child is killed or wounded. They are protected under the laws of war, and yet they are ones who are disproportionately paying the ultimate price in this war,” said Türk.

Türk said he was horrified by the destruction of An Nasser Medical Complex and Al Shifa Medical Complex and the reported discovery of mass graves in and around these locations. He called for independent, effective and transparent investigations into the deaths.

“Given the prevailing climate of impunity, this should include international investigators,” he added. “Hospitals are entitled to very special protection under international humanitarian law. And the intentional killing of civilians, detainees, and others who are hors de combat is a war crime.”

The High Commissioner said the unspeakable suffering caused by the fighting – alongside the resulting misery and destruction, starvation and disease, and the risk of wider conflict – must end once and for all. He reiterated his call for an immediate ceasefire, the release of hostages and those held in arbitrary detention, and the unfettered flow of humanitarian aid.

At the same time, Türk said grave human rights violations were continuing unabated in the occupied West Bank. Despite international condemnation of massive settler attacks from 12-14 April facilitated by the Israeli Security Forces (ISF), settler violence has continued with the support, protection, and participation of the ISF.

During a 50-hour long operation into Nur Shams refugee camp and Tulkarem city starting on 18 April, the ISF deployed ground troops, bulldozers and drones, and sealed the camp. Fourteen Palestinians were killed, three of them children. Ten members of the ISF were hurt.

The UN Human Rights Office received reports that several Palestinians were unlawfully killed and that the ISF used unarmed Palestinians to shield their forces from attack and killed others in apparent extrajudicial executions. Dozens were reportedly detained and ill-treated. The ISF inflicted unprecedented and apparently wanton destruction on the camp and its infrastructure.

On 20 April, the ISF or settlers shot and killed a 50-year-old Palestinian ambulance driver. The ambulance was evacuating two Palestinians injured by live ammunition during an attack by settlers, who were accompanied by the ISF, in As Sawiya, Nablus.

XV. Bureau of the UN Palestinian Rights Committee visits Trinidad and Tobago, calls for recognition of the State of Palestine

On 23 April, the Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) issued the following [statement](#) during its delegation visit to Trinidad and Tobago.

The Bureau of the United Nations Committee for the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People visited Trinidad and Tobago from 22 to 23 April 2024 to advocate for Palestinian rights and urged the Government to consider recognizing the State of Palestine.

During the visit, the Bureau consulted with the Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, visited the Diplomatic Academy at the University of Trinidad and Tobago, as well as the Trinidad and Tobago Islamic League. Discussions revolved around the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Interlocutors expressed widespread support for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, unimpeded humanitarian aid access, backing for UNRWA, and the promotion of a two-State solution.

The Bureau commended the depth of understanding and awareness about the Gaza situation in Trinidad and Tobago, and emphasized the importance of supporting the Palestinian people, including by establishing full diplomatic relations with the State of Palestine.

The Bureau reiterates its urgent appeal for an immediate and lasting ceasefire in Gaza, an end to the forced displacement of Palestinians, and unobstructed access to humanitarian assistance.

XVI. UN human rights experts warn that withholding tax revenue and cutting off Palestinian banks from the global financial system could paralyse Palestinian economy

On 25 April, Professor Attiya Waris, Independent Expert on Foreign Debt and human rights and Professor Alena Douhan, Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights issued the following [statement](#).

Unilaterally cutting off Palestinian banks from the global banking system would be a violation of the fundamental principles of international law, two UN experts warned today, after an Israeli Minister threatened to revoke a protection waiver issued annually to two banks in Israel that maintain connections to Palestinian financial institutions.

“Cutting off Palestinian banks from the global banking system unilaterally also violates the principle of sovereign equality of states, the principle of non-intervention into the domestic affairs of states, the principle of cooperation in good faith,” the experts said.

“The impossibility of bank transfers will affect all people of Palestine indiscriminately, exacerbate the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe, and affect all fundamental human rights, including the right to food, right to water and sanitation, right to health, freedom from torture and the right to life.”

The waiver, issued annually and signed by the Israeli Finance minister, protects Israeli banks from lawsuits involving the Palestinian Authority for ‘transferring funds to terror groups.’ Without this protection,

Israeli banks will be exposed to legal action, and can be expected to break ties with Palestinian banks. The waiver expired on 1 April 2024.

The Palestinian economy runs on the Israeli shekel and its financial dealings with the rest of the world must go through the Israeli banking system.

Isolating the Palestinian authority from the financial world will cripple the Palestinian economy, the experts warned, recalling that the protection waivers guaranteed under the Oslo and Paris Accords.

Since the 1990s peace accords, Israel has also collected tax revenue on behalf of Palestinians and transferred the funds to the Palestinian authority. A large portion of these funds is used for wage payments. Since 24 January 2024, the monthly tax revenue previously allocated to the Palestinian Authority's public sector employees in Gaza has been transferred to a Norwegian-based trust account. However, the Norwegian fund cannot release the money to pay public sector employees in Gaza without Israel's permission.

"Because a significant proportion of taxes in the Palestinian Authority's budget collected by Israel, the Palestinian Authority is vulnerable to unilateral suspensions by Israel of transfers of clearance revenue, qualifying as unilateral coercive measures contrary to international law" the experts said.

The experts have established communication channels with the Israeli Government to address these concerns. They called for interim measures to prevent irreparable harm and potential breaches of international law.

XVII. ICJ declines to indicate provisional measures under Genocide Convention in the case of Nicaragua vs. Germany

On 30 April, the International Criminal Court of Justice issued an order on "Alleged Breaches of Certain International Obligations in respect of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (Nicaragua v. Germany)" [summarized](#) below.

The Court begins by recalling that, on 1 March 2024, Nicaragua filed in the Registry of the Court an Application instituting proceedings against Germany concerning alleged breaches of certain international obligations in respect of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Application contained a Request for the indication of provisional measures. At the end of its oral observations, Nicaragua requested the Court

"as a matter of extreme urgency, pending the Court's determination of this case on the merits, and after recalling to the Parties the obligation of compliance with humanitarian law as well as of the obligation of cooperation to bring to an end all serious breaches of peremptory norms of international law, 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, as well as in other parts of Palestine, namely, to order that:

(1) Germany must immediately suspend its aid to Israel, in particular its military assistance, export and authorization of export of military equipment and war weapons, in so far as this aid is used or could be used to commit or to facilitate serious violations of the Genocide Convention, international humanitarian law or other peremptory norms of general international law;

(2) Germany must immediately ensure that military equipment, war weapons, and other equipment used for military purposes already delivered by Germany and German entities to Israel are not used to commit or to facilitate serious violations of the Genocide Convention, international humanitarian law or other peremptory norms of general international law;

(3) Germany must resume its support and financing of UNRWA in respect of its operations in Gaza.”

In the Order, the Court first recalls that, pursuant to Article 41 of the Statute, it has “the power to indicate, if it considers that circumstances so require, any provisional measures which ought to be taken to preserve the respective rights of either party”. In the present proceedings, the Court considers that it must first ascertain whether Nicaragua has sufficiently shown that the circumstances as they now present themselves to the Court are such as to require the exercise of its power to indicate provisional measures.

The Court notes that, according to Nicaragua, by providing weapons to Israel and by suspending the provision of funds to UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, Germany has failed to comply with its obligations under the Genocide Convention and international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the Additional Protocols of 8 June 1977, and its intransgressible principles. Nicaragua contends that, for the year 2023, the German Government authorized exports of “military equipment and war weapons” worth more than ten times those for the year 2022, the great majority of which were granted after the beginning of the military operation by Israel in the Gaza Strip. Nicaragua claims that Germany could not be unaware of the situation in Gaza nor ignore the likelihood that the “military equipment and war weapons” provided by it would be used by Israel “to bomb and kill thousands of Palestinian children, women and men.” It also claims that Germany has not only violated its obligations to prevent and punish breaches of the Genocide Convention and of international humanitarian law, but that it is also “complicit in them by aiding and assisting the commission of [those] breaches.”

In response, the Court notes that Germany first states that it has fulfilled the obligation incumbent on States parties to the Genocide Convention to prevent the occurrence of genocide by continuously using all reasonable means at its disposal to exert its influence on Israel in order to improve the situation in Gaza and to furnish humanitarian aid to the population of Gaza. Second, it contends that the obligation that could be derived from common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions incumbent on non-parties to an armed conflict does not oblige a State to refrain completely from providing military support to a State involved in an armed conflict. Germany further contends that it has stringent licensing standards to assess whether there is any risk of serious violations of the Genocide Convention, international humanitarian law and other peremptory norms of international law by the recipient State. According to Germany, there is no evidence that the supply of military equipment to Israel by Germany would have contributed to an alleged genocide or to breaches of international humanitarian law.

The Court notes that Germany, as it has stated, is bound by the Arms Trade Treaty of 2 April 2013 and by the European Council Common Position of 8 December 2008, as amended on 17 September 2019, which defines common rules governing the control of exports of military technology and equipment.

The Court further notes that, as Germany has also stated, the German legal framework on the manufacturing, marketing and export of weapons and other military equipment involves an inter-agency process with consideration by at least two ministries, and potentially other ministries depending on the content of the licence application. Under this legal framework, there are two categories of military technology and equipment subject to licensing: “war weapons,” whose export requires two licences, and “other military equipment,” whose export requires only one licence. Under the German legal framework, for every licence that is granted, an assessment is carried out by the German Government to ascertain

whether there is a clear risk that the particular item subject to licensing would be used in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity or grave breaches of the four Geneva Conventions.

The Court notes in addition that, as stated by Germany, there has been a significant decrease since November 2023 in the value of material for which the licences were granted, from approximately €200 million in October 2023 to approximately €24 million in November 2023, to approximately €1 million in March 2024. The Court also notes that, since 7 October 2023, according to Germany, only four licences for “war weapons” have been granted: two for training ammunition, one for propellant charges for test purposes, and one concerning the export of 3,000 portable antitank weapons. The Court further notes that Israel had also approached the German Government in 2023 for tank ammunition and that no decision by the Respondent has thus far been made regarding this request. In addition, according to Germany, the licensing for export of a submarine to Israel is currently pending, as only one of the two licences required for this export has so far been granted. Finally, the Court takes note of Germany’s statement that 98 per cent of the licences granted since 7 October 2023 concerned “other military equipment” and not “war weapons.”

With regard to Nicaragua’s request that Germany “resume its support and financing of UNRWA in respect of its operations in Gaza,” the Court notes that Germany announced its decision to suspend its contribution to UNRWA on 27 January 2024 in respect of operations in Gaza. In this regard, the Court observes, first, that contributions to UNRWA are voluntary in nature. Second, it notes that, according to the information provided to it by Germany, no new payment was due from the latter in the weeks following the announcement of its decision. Finally, the Court notes that Germany stated that it has supported initiatives aimed at funding the agency’s work, in particular through the payment of €50 million by the European Union to UNRWA on 1 March 2024, as well as providing financial and material support to other organizations operating in the Gaza Strip.

Based on the factual information and legal arguments presented by the Parties, the Court concludes that, at present, the circumstances are not such as to require the exercise of its power under Article 41 of the Statute to indicate provisional measures.

As to Germany’s request that the case be removed from the List, the Court notes that, as it has held in the past, where there is a manifest lack of jurisdiction, it can remove the case from the List at the provisional measures stage. Conversely, where there is no such manifest lack of jurisdiction, the Court cannot remove the case at that stage. In the present case, there being no manifest lack of jurisdiction, the Court cannot accede to Germany’s request.

The Court recalls that, in its Order of 26 January 2024 in the case concerning *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*, it noted that the military operation conducted by Israel following the attack of 7 October 2023 had resulted in “a large number of deaths and injuries, as well as the massive destruction of homes, the forcible displacement of the vast majority of the population, and extensive damage to civilian infrastructure.” In addition, the Court remains deeply concerned about the catastrophic living conditions of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, in particular in view of the prolonged and widespread deprivation of food and other basic necessities to which they have been subjected, as acknowledged by the Court in its Order of 28 March 2024 rendered in the same case.

The Court further recalls that, pursuant to common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions, all States parties are under an obligation “to respect and to ensure respect” for the Conventions “in all circumstances.” It follows from that provision that every State party to these Conventions, whether or not it is a party to a specific conflict, is under an obligation to ensure that the requirements of the instruments in question are complied with. Such an obligation does not derive only from the Conventions themselves, but from the

general principles of humanitarian law to which the Conventions merely give specific expression. With regard to the Genocide Convention, the Court has had the opportunity to observe that the obligation to prevent the commission of the crime of genocide, pursuant to Article I, requires States parties that are aware, or that should normally have been aware, of the serious risk that acts of genocide would have been committed, to employ all means reasonably available to them to prevent genocide so far as possible. Further, States parties are bound by the Genocide Convention not to commit any other acts enumerated in Article III.

Moreover, the Court considers it particularly important to remind all States of their international obligations relating to the transfer of arms to parties to an armed conflict, in order to avoid the risk that such arms might be used to violate the above-mentioned Conventions. All these obligations are incumbent upon Germany as a State party to the said Conventions in its supply of arms to Israel.

The full text of the operative clause of the Order reads as follows:

“For these reasons,

THE COURT,

By fifteen votes to one,

Finds that the circumstances, as they now present themselves to the Court, are not such as to require the exercise of its power under Article 41 of the Statute to indicate provisional measures.

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* Al-Khasawneh.”

Vice-President SEBUTINDE appends a separate opinion to the Order of the Court; Judge IWASAWA appends a separate opinion to the Order of the Court; Judges CLEVELAND and TLADI append declarations to the Order of the Court; Judge *ad hoc* AL-KHASAWNEH appends a dissenting opinion to the Order of the Court.

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XVIII. Secretary-General appeals to prevent Rafah assault

On 30 April, the Secretary-General António Guterres made the following [statement](#) during a press encounter.

As Passover ends, I once again express my solidarity with the victims of the unconscionable Hamas terror attacks of 7 October, with the hostages, and with their families and friends. Passover reminds us that the persecution of the Jews is as old as history itself. We all have a duty to speak out against all forms of antisemitism, in communities, in the media, and online.

Nearly seven months after 7 October, the situation for people in Gaza is worsening by the day. I have called consistently for a humanitarian ceasefire, the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, and a massive surge in humanitarian aid. Unfortunately, that has not happened – yet. But negotiations are once again underway.

For the sake of the people of Gaza, for the sake of the hostages and their families in Israel, and for the sake of the region and the wider world, I strongly encourage the government of Israel and the Hamas leadership to reach now an agreement.

Without that, I fear the war, with all its consequences both in Gaza and across the region, will worsen exponentially. Recent weeks have seen airstrikes on the Rafah area.

A military assault on Rafah would be an unbearable escalation, killing thousands more civilians and forcing hundreds of thousands to flee. It would have a devastating impact on Palestinians in Gaza, with serious repercussions on the occupied West Bank, and across the wider region.

All members of the Security Council, and many other governments, have clearly expressed their opposition to such an operation. I appeal for all those with influence over Israel to do everything in their power to prevent it.

More than 1.2 million people are now seeking shelter in Rafah governorate, most of them fleeing the Israeli bombardment that has reportedly killed over 34,000 people. They have very little to eat, hardly any access to medical care, little shelter, and nowhere safe to go.

In northern Gaza, the most vulnerable – from sick children to people with disabilities – are already dying of hunger and disease. We must do everything possible to avert an entirely preventable, human-made famine.

We have seen incremental progress recently, but much more is urgently needed — including the promised opening of two crossing points between Israel and northern Gaza, so that aid can be brought into Gaza from Ashdod port and Jordan.

Under international humanitarian law, civilians must be protected – and they must be able to receive the essentials they need to survive, including food, shelter, and health care. A major obstacle to distributing aid across Gaza is the lack of security for humanitarians and the people we serve. Humanitarian convoys, facilities and personnel, and the people in need, must not be targets.

We welcome aid delivery by air and sea, but there is no alternative to the massive use of land routes. I again call on the Israeli authorities to allow and facilitate safe, rapid and unimpeded access for humanitarian aid and humanitarian workers, including UNRWA, throughout Gaza.

Dear members of the media,

The health system in Gaza has been decimated by the war. Two-thirds of hospitals and health centres are out of action; many of those that remain are seriously damaged. Some hospitals now resemble cemeteries. I am deeply alarmed by reports that mass graves have been discovered in several locations in Gaza, including Al Shifa Medical Complex and Nasser Medical Complex. In Nasser alone, over 390 bodies have reportedly been exhumed.

There are competing narratives around several of these mass graves, including serious allegations that some of those buried were unlawfully killed. It is imperative that independent international investigators, with forensic expertise, are allowed immediate access to the sites of these mass graves, to establish the precise circumstances under which hundreds of Palestinians lost their lives and were buried, or reburied.

The families of the dead and missing have a right to know what happened. And the world has a right to accountability for any violations of international law that may have taken place.

Hospitals, health workers, patients and all civilians must be protected and the human rights of all must be respected.

Dear members of the media,

I would like to conclude with a few words about UNRWA. We recognize the irreplaceable and indispensable work of UNRWA to support millions of people in Gaza, the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

Following the report by Ms. Catherine Colonna on mechanisms and procedures to ensure UNRWA's adherence to the humanitarian principle of neutrality, an action plan is being put in place to implement the recommendations of the report.

I appeal to donors, host countries and staff to cooperate with this effort.

Most countries have suspended contributions to UNRWA but many of them have resumed them. We are optimistic that others will join. And some Member States are giving to UNRWA for the first time and the generosity of private donors around the world is also heartening and unprecedented. But we still have a funding gap.

I call on Member States, both traditional and new donors, to pledge funds generously to ensure the continuity of the agency's operations.

UNRWA's presence across the region is a source of hope and stability. Its education, healthcare and other services provide a sense of normality, safety and stability to desperate communities.

Dear members of the media,

This is the moment to reaffirm our hope for, and contributions to, a two-state solution — the only sustainable path to peace and security for Israelis, Palestinians, and the wider region.

The United Nations is totally committed to supporting a pathway to peace, based on an end to the occupation and the establishment of a fully independent, democratic, viable, contiguous, and sovereign Palestinian State, with Gaza as an integral part.

Thank you.