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**Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem
and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory**

Security Council
Seventy-ninth year

Identical letters dated 4 April 2024 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

It has been 10 days since the adoption by the Security Council of its resolution [2728 \(2024\)](#), demanding an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. The Muslim holy month of Ramadan is nearing its end, and still Israel, the occupying Power, carries on with its savage war against the Palestinian people in blatant contempt of the Council's demands.

Furthermore, it has been seven days since the International Court of Justice, in response to the urgent request by South Africa for further provisional measures due to the failure of Israel to comply with the Court's 26 January order and the resultant significant deterioration of the situation, modified its order on 28 March, reaffirming its initial order and unanimously ordering Israel to, inter alia, "take all necessary and effective measures to ensure, without delay, in full cooperation with the United Nations, the unhindered provision at scale by all concerned of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance, including food, water, electricity, fuel, shelter, clothing, hygiene and sanitation requirements, as well as medical supplies and medical care, to Palestinians throughout Gaza, including by increasing the capacity and number of land crossing points".

The Court, observing that "Palestinians in Gaza are no longer facing only a risk of famine ... but that famine is setting in"; considering the unprecedented levels of food insecurity and the increasing risks of epidemics to be "exceptionally grave"; and recalling that, since its 26 January order, over 6,600 more Palestinians had been killed and another 11,000 had been injured, also ordered Israel to "ensure with immediate effect that its military does not commit acts which constitute a violation of any of the rights of the Palestinians in Gaza as a protected group under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, including by preventing, through any action, the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance".

And, still, directed by the highest echelons of the Government and military of Israel, Israeli occupying forces continue systematically to attack Palestinian children,



women and men – the casualty toll now surpassing 33,000 Palestinians killed and 75,577 injured – and to attack and destroy homes, shelters and hospitals, its deadly siege on the Al-Shifa hospital being the most recent and shocking.

And still, in spite – and in flagrant violation – of its Charter obligations and binding International Court of Justice orders, Israel continues to obstruct humanitarian access and attack humanitarian personnel and aid convoys, literally annihilating the means for human survival in Gaza. Its deliberate attack, on 2 April, killing humanitarians affiliated with the World Central Kitchen who were delivering food to starving Palestinian civilians, being the latest such appalling incident.

And, it continues to refuse to cooperate with the United Nations, persisting with its libelous smear campaign and attempts to block and dismantle the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the backbone of United Nations humanitarian operations in Gaza, depriving the population of desperately needed assistance and thwarting efforts to address the raging food insecurity resulting from the use by Israel of starvation as a method of warfare, which has already caused more than 30 civilian deaths, including among children, and accelerated the spread of malnutrition and disease.

Israel is carrying on with its violations of Council resolution [2728 \(2024\)](#) and of the International Court of Justice provisional measures orders, acting as if neither the Council nor the Court had ever spoken, as if they had no authority and as if their decisions were not binding.

Israel is perpetrating these violations crimes willfully and wantonly, confident it will never face consequences for its heinous crimes. And, when faced with international condemnation, it cynically distorts and deflects and flagrantly lies about its intentions and actions, such as its targeted missile strikes on a clearly-marked World Central Kitchen convoy in Deir Al-Balah, murdering seven humanitarian workers – a Palestinian, an Australian citizen, three British citizens, a Polish citizen, and an American-Canadian citizen – after they had just delivered over 100 tons of food aid.

The fact is that Israel is violating every provision of international humanitarian and human rights law intended to protect civilians. Israel is waging war on the Palestinian people, a brutal war of starvation, a war of displacement and impoverishment, a war on health care, a war on humanitarians, a war on UNRWA and the United Nations as a whole, a war on international law, a war on humanity. It must be stopped.

The world cannot stand by while Israel carries on with its erasure of the Palestinian people, by death – by every form of lethal weaponry, by famine, by disease – or by forced transfer from their land. Nor can it stand by as Israel tramples international law, ignoring, mocking and perverting the law to justify its war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in Occupied Palestine.¹

¹ As noted by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Francesca Albanese, in her most recent report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/55/73](#)): “Israel has used international humanitarian law terminology to justify its systematic use of lethal violence against Palestinian civilians as a group and the extensive destruction of life-sustaining infrastructures. Israel has done this by deploying international humanitarian law concepts, such as human shields, collateral damage, safe zones, evacuations and medical protection, in such a permissive manner so as to gut these concepts of their normative content, subverting their protective purpose and ultimately eroding the distinction between civilians and combatants in Israeli actions in Gaza”.

Yet, it continues to be permitted to do so, by those who refuse to impose consequences for its breaches and those who continue to arm and support Israel, enabling and emboldening only more crimes. It is time to end complicity and pursue accountability to stop this travesty of justice.

The Security Council, first and foremost, must act to hold Israel responsible for its grave breaches. This must begin with measures to implement its own resolutions, including resolution 2728 (2024), using all the tools available to it, including sanctions. Without accountability, rather than heeding the Council's demands and International Court of Justice orders, Israel is blatantly speeding up its campaign of death, destruction and depopulation against the Palestinian people.

The aftermath of the onslaught of Israel on the Al-Shifa hospital starkly reflects this gruesome reality. Despite warnings that Al-Shifa had again come under attack – with Israeli soldiers besieging and destroying hospital premises, killing and wounding medical personnel, patients and displaced civilians, digging up graves in the hospital courtyard, crushing bodies with tanks and violently detaining and torturing doctors, nurses and staff, leaving patients without care in a horrific situation from which many could not escape – no action was taken to halt this depraved attack and protect Palestinian civilians. This was allowed to happen despite explicit stipulations of Article 18 of the Fourth Geneva Convention: “Civilian hospitals organized to give care to the wounded and sick, the infirm and maternity cases, may in no circumstances be the object of attack, but shall at all times be respected and protected by the Parties to the conflict”.

Yesterday, it was announced that the Al-Shifa hospital, once the largest medical center in Gaza, had permanently ceased operations owing to the staggering extent of destruction caused by the Israeli occupying forces, buildings charred and ruined, leaving civilians in northern Gaza without medical care and Gaza's entire population without treatments that could only be accessed at Al-Shifa. The Interim Director of Al-Shifa, Dr. Marwan Abu Saada, stressed: “There is a deliberate destruction to eradicate any semblance of life or health-care system in the northern Gaza Strip, in Gaza Governorate ... We are left with very little of the health-care sector to carry on this mission”.

The destruction by Israel of Al-Shifa and its torture and massacre of civilians there are not the “collateral damage” of war. Likewise, there is nothing “unintentional” about its strike on the World Central Kitchen humanitarian convoy, which follows a continual pattern of targeting humanitarians, 196 of whom have been killed to date in Gaza, and has now led to the suspension of humanitarian aid operations, including the maritime corridor, as the dangers of the onslaught by Israel have become too high for humanitarian personnel to bear.

As a direct consequence, Palestinian children, women and men will continue to be left without food, water, medical care and life essentials, hastening the spread of famine and starvation, disease and death, already ravaging the civilian population. This atrocity is being permitted to happen although tons of humanitarian supplies are just metres away on the other side of the Rafah border with Egypt and thousands of UNRWA staff remain ready to carry out their humanitarian mandate.

This is all by design. Israel is deliberately impeding humanitarian access; it has designated areas in Gaza “death zones”, implements a shoot-to-kill policy and sinister artificial intelligence-generated targeting of Palestinian civilians; it has not hidden its plans to invade Rafah, its aims to ethnically cleanse our people. Let us not forget the declarations of war and siege by the Israeli Government and military officials, their non-stop incitement and dehumanization of Palestinians, calling them “human animals”, pledging “no electricity, no food, no water, no gas”, besieging an entire population, half children, promising to turn Gaza into hell.

We call on the international community, including the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and all States, to act now, with urgency and with all possible political, legal and economic measures, to stop this hell, stop these atrocities, stop this genocide, stop this ongoing Nakba against the Palestinian people. We appeal for immediate action to protect our people and to save the human lives in peril under this illegal Israeli occupation and apartheid regime that must come to an end.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 830 letters on the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 ([A/55/432-S/2000/921](#)) to 15 March 2024 ([A/ES-10/986-S/2024/240](#)) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations against our people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Riyad Mansour**
Minister
Permanent Observer
