



DIVISION FOR  
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

# Bulletin

on action by the United Nations system and  
intergovernmental organizations  
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:*

<https://www.un.org/unispal/data-collection/monthly-bulletin/>

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## **I. As the war in Gaza enters its seventh month, 1.74 million more Palestinians will be pushed into poverty across Palestine, according to UNDP and ESCWA assessment**

*On 1 May, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) issued the following [press release](#).*

As the war in Gaza approaches its seventh month, the poverty rate in the State of Palestine continues to escalate, reaching 58.4 percent, thrusting nearly 1.74 million additional people into poverty, as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) sustains a staggering plunge by 26.9 percent—a loss of US\$7.1 billion from a 2023 no-war baseline—according to [new estimates](#) by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

Today, both UNDP and ESCWA released an update of their joint initial rapid assessment titled ‘The Gaza War: Expected Socio-Economic Impacts on the State of Palestine’, which was released in November 2023 and estimated the impacts of the war on the State of Palestine and on Gaza, for the first three months. The new updated assessment estimates the impacts at six months, with projections for seven-, eight- and nine-months scenarios.

“Every additional day that this war continues is exacting huge and compounding costs to Gazans and all Palestinians, now and in the medium and long term. Compared to our preliminary assessment, these new figures warn that the suffering in Gaza will not end when the war does,” said UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner. “Unprecedented levels of human losses, capital destruction, and the steep rise in poverty in such a short period of time will precipitate a serious development crisis that jeopardizes the future of generations to come.”

According to projections, in a scenario where the war continues for nine months, poverty is estimated to more than double (increasing to 60.7 percent, 2.25 times of pre-war levels), raising the number of additional people pushed into poverty to more than 1.86 million, while the decrease of GDP would reach 29 percent with total losses of US\$7.6 billion. The assessment also warns of a sharp decline in the Human Development Index (HDI), UNDP’s summary measure of wellbeing, as the setback in human development in the State of Palestine may exceed two decades—to earlier than 2004, when the HDI was first calculated for the State of Palestine.

“Unlike previous wars, the destruction in Gaza today is unprecedented in scope and scale and coupled with the loss of homes, livelihoods, natural resources, infrastructure as well as institutional capacities, may have deep and systemic impacts for decades to come,” said ESCWA Executive Secretary Rola Dashti. “This assessment projects that Gaza will be rendered fully dependent on external assistance on a scale not seen since 1948, as it will be left without a functional economy, or any means of production, self-sustainment, employment, or capacity for trade.”

The UNDP-ESCWA updated assessment complements results of the Joint Interim Damage Assessment recently released by the World Bank and the United Nations, which indicated that direct damages inflicted on Gaza’s built infrastructure as of January 2024, amount to approximately US\$18.5 billion, equivalent to 97 percent of the total GDP of the State of Palestine in 2022.

The updated assessment was presented at a meeting that brought together directors of key United Nations agencies in the Arab States region to discuss how different regional actors can best support efforts of the UN Country Team in the occupied Palestinian territory for recovery assessment and planning. UNDP, as lead agency on early recovery, has been working closely with UN agencies and national partners to plan and prepare for commencing early recovery in Gaza and the West Bank, including east Jerusalem, without delay as conditions allow.

## **II. Head of the UN Population Fund warns that the invasion of Rafah would spell catastrophe for pregnant women, new mothers, and newborns**

*Following is the [statement](#) from UNFPA Executive Director Natalia Kanem on the potential invasion in Rafah issued on 5 May.*

Close to seven months of war has inflicted unimaginable suffering on the people of Gaza, including hundreds of thousands of pregnant and breastfeeding women and newborns. Many have been displaced multiple times, living in inhumane conditions with too little to eat, hardly any access to medical care and nowhere to go. People are hungry, exhausted and scared; and they cannot keep running.

More than one million people are crammed into Rafah, sleeping in the streets and makeshift shelters in a city that is hosting five times its natural capacity. A ground invasion in Rafah would be a catastrophe for traumatized pregnant women and new mothers, and gravely impact humanitarian aid operations that are already struggling to reach people in desperate need throughout Gaza.

Today, major hospitals lie in ruins across Gaza and not a single health facility is fully operational following more than 440 attacks on health care since the war began in October.

Rafah is the main hub of the humanitarian response in Gaza and has some of its last functioning health facilities. This includes the Al-Helal Al-Emirati Maternity Hospital, which is now the main facility for pregnant women in Rafah, managing around 60 deliveries every day. An attack in Rafah could turn this and other health facilities from places of hope into rubble and dust – putting at risk the lives of tens of thousands of pregnant women.

UNFPA-delivered reproductive health kits have enabled safe births for more than 20,000 women in Gaza. The kits include lifesaving medicines and equipment for maternal health, including for emergency obstetric care. We have set up a mobile maternity clinic in Rafah, with two more on the way. Hundreds of UNFPA-trained midwives are supporting pregnant women and new mothers unable to access a health clinic or hospital. UNFPA has also distributed essential supplies to thousands of new mothers, and we are providing psychosocial support to thousands of women, adolescents, and children.

We call for all hospitals, healthcare workers and patients to be protected. Civilians must never be a target, and their needs must be met. We call for an immediate ceasefire, and for the unconditional release of all hostages in Gaza. The women and girls of Gaza need peace now.

### **III. UN Secretary-General urges resolution and warns of potential military escalation in Gaza**

*On 6 May, Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General, issued the following [statement](#).*

The Secretary-General reiterates his pressing call to both the government of Israel and the leadership of Hamas to go the extra mile needed to make an agreement come true and stop the present suffering.

The Secretary-General is deeply concerned by the indications that a large-scale military operation in Rafah may be imminent. We are already seeing movements of people – many of these people are in desperate humanitarian condition and have been repeatedly displaced. They search safety that has been so many times denied.

The Secretary-General reminds the parties that the protection of civilians is paramount in international humanitarian law.

### **IV. 7 UN experts condemn the continued and systematic onslaught of violence committed against Palestinians in Gaza**

*On 6 May, UN experts Reem Alsalem, Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences; Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian*

*Territory occupied since 1967; Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing; Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Pedro Arrojo Agudo, Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation; Paula Gaviria Betancur, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons; Ben Saul, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism issued the following [press release](#).*

UN experts today condemned the continued and systematic onslaught of violence committed against Palestinians in Gaza, with most victims being women and children over the past seven months.

“We are horrified at details emerging from mass graves recently unearthed in the Gaza Strip. Over 390 bodies have been discovered at Nasser and Al Shifa hospitals, including of women and children, with many reportedly showing signs of torture and summary executions, and potential instances of people buried alive,” the experts said.

They noted that women, girls and children overall are among those most exposed to danger in this conflict, and that as of 29 April 2024, of 34,488 Palestinians killed in Gaza, 14,500 have been children and 9,500 women. Another 77,643 have reportedly been injured, of which 75% are estimated to be female. Over 8,000 others are reported missing or under the rubble – and the experts noted that at least half of them can be assumed to be women and children. They also noted that an estimated 63 women, including 37 mothers are being killed daily and 17,000 Palestinian children are believed to have been orphaned since the war on Gaza began.

1.7 million people are internally displaced, and 1.1 million are projected to face catastrophic levels of food insecurity. According to UN reports, a number of women and girls have also been forcefully disappeared by the Israeli military since the beginning of Israel’s onslaught. The experts noted that Israeli forces had also destroyed Gaza’s largest fertility clinic, reported to have been storing 3,000 embryos.

“The treatment of pregnant and lactating women continues to be appalling, with the direct bombardment of hospitals and deliberate denial of access to health care facilities by Israeli snipers, combined with the lack of beds and medical resources placing an estimated 50,000 pregnant Palestinian women and 20,000 new-born babies at unimaginable risk. Over 183 women per day are giving birth without pain relief, while hundreds of babies have died because of a lack of electricity to power incubators,” they said. “The dreadful conditions have resulted in increases in miscarriages by up to 300 percent. 95 per cent of pregnant and breastfeeding women face severe food poverty.”

The experts said women in labour deliver their babies in horrific circumstances. According to UNFPA, around 155,000 pregnant women and new mothers are struggling to survive and access basic health care. In addition, an estimated 690,000 women and girls in Gaza who require menstrual hygiene supplies are unable to manage their menstrual cycle in privacy and with dignity with some reports of contraceptive pills being taken to avoid the unhygienic menstrual conditions.

They said unprecedented mass destruction of housing and precarious tent living conditions have disproportionately impacted women and girls, including on their personal security and privacy.

“Nothing illustrates systematic violence being inflicted on women and their children better than the story of an infant who was saved from her mother’s womb after she was killed in an Israeli attack in the Gaza Strip, and died days later in an incubator on 26 April,” the experts said.

They were dismayed at continued reports of sexual assault and violence against women and girls, including against those detained by Israeli occupation forces. The experts said the Government of Israel has continuously failed to conduct an independent, impartial and effective investigation into the reported crimes.

“We are appalled that women are being targeted by Israel with such vicious, indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks, seemingly sparing no means to destroy their lives and deny them their fundamental human rights,” they said.

“Israel must cease all hostilities and States must end the export of all weapons immediately. These States can no longer ignore the fact that the weapons are being used to kill and maim innocent women and children. There can be no more excuses,” the experts said. “Women and children are entitled to special protection under international humanitarian law and human rights law”.

## **V. Intensified military operations will bring increased death and despair for Rafah’s 700,000 women and girls says UN Women**

*On 6 May, UN Women issued the following [press release](#).*

New UN Women survey data from Rafah highlights the depth of physical and mental despair, with 93% of women interviewed feeling unsafe and over half reporting medical conditions requiring urgent attention. With any Israeli ground invasion, these numbers will soar.

With the population of the southern city of Rafah, in Gaza, ballooning fivefold, from 250,000 to 1.4 million people, in just seven months of war, the physical and mental health conditions for women and girls have been deteriorating rapidly, as new data collected by UN Women reveals. The imminent risk of death and injuries among Rafah’s 700,000 women and girls will escalate with any ground invasion, as they have nowhere to go, to escape the bombing and killing.

More than 10,000 women have been killed in Gaza since the start of the war, among them 6,000 mothers leaving 19,000 orphaned children behind. As a 45-year-old woman describes: “There is no safety or security. I am scared for my life, my husband’s, and my children’s. If I were to talk about it for the next 100 years, I cannot describe the fear we live in”.

UN Women’s survey data sheds light on the devastating reality of life for women and girls in Rafah:

1. Rafah now hosts 700,000 women and girls who have nowhere else to go. 93 per cent of women respondents express feeling unsafe within their own homes or displaced locations.
2. Over 80 per cent of women report feelings of depression, 66 per cent are not able to sleep, and over 70 per cent have heightened anxiety and nightmares.
3. More than half of women surveyed (51 per cent) have a medical condition requiring urgent medical attention since the start of the war, with 62 per cent unable to pay for necessary medical care.
4. More than 6 out of 10 of the interviewed women who are currently pregnant or have been pregnant since October 7<sup>th</sup> reported complications, including 95 per cent reporting urinary tract infections; 80 per cent anemia; 30 per cent pre-term labor, and 50 per cent hypertensive disorders. In households with nursing mothers, 72 per cent reported that there are challenges in breastfeeding and in meeting the nutritional needs of babies.
5. Women in Rafah struggle to protect the physical and mental well-being of their children, while also bearing increased burdens of caregiving and domestic responsibilities particularly in tents and overcrowded households. 8 out of 10 (79 per cent) of female and male respondents stated that mothers are taking on more responsibility than men to provide emotional support for adult family members and children alike.

“Women and girls in Rafah, as in the rest of Gaza, are in a state of constant despair and fear already. A ground invasion would be an unbearable escalation that risks killing thousands more civilians and forcing hundreds of thousands to flee again. We must protect civilians. We need an immediate ceasefire and unimpeded and safe humanitarian aid distribution across all Gaza. The need for peace has never been more urgent. This is our only hope”, said Sima Bahous, UN Women Executive Director.



UN Women calls for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution 2728 (2024) adopted on 25 March 2024 which demands an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages, and safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian aid.

Source: UN Women's primary data collection, covering 360 respondents – 182 women – in Rafah by end April 2024.

## **VI. UNICEF's urgent plea for ceasefire and protection of civilians amidst escalating violence in Rafah: A call for the children of Gaza**

*This is a [summary](#) of what was said by UNICEF Spokesperson James Elder – to whom quoted text may be attributed – at a press briefing on 7 May.*

Every warning. Every story of children killed and wounded. Every image of heartbreak and bloodshed. Every mind-boggling piece of data on the number of children and mothers killed; of homes and hospitals destroyed. All Ignored.

Our worst fear – Gazans' nightmare – appears to be a reality. A reality that those holding power have the ability to prevent.

This is why UNICEF and all humanitarian agencies have been calling for a ceasefire, and for an offensive in Rafah not to take place.

Rafah is a city of children. More than half of every single girl and boy in Gaza live in Rafah.

If we define safety – as International Humanitarian Law says we must – as freedom from bombardment, as well as access to safe water, sufficient food, shelter and medicine – then there is nowhere safe on the Gaza strip to go to.

In Rafah there is approximately one toilet for every 850 people. The situation is four times worse for showers. That is, around one shower for every 3,500 people. In the zones families have been told to move to, the situation is, staggeringly, much worse.

Rafah is home to what is now Gaza's largest remaining hospital – the "European hospital" – named as such to honour the European Union that paid for its construction. Amid the systematic devastation of Gaza's health system, Rafah's European Hospital is one of civilians' last lifelines.

The South of the Gaza Strip is also the entry point for most of the aid that enters Gaza. A military assault will, at best, greatly complicate aid delivery. If Rafah gate closes for an extended period, it's hard to see how famine in Gaza can be averted.

Families coping capacity has been smashed. They are hanging on – physically and psychologically – by a thread. I don't recall meeting anyone in Rafah who hadn't lost a loved one, or their home; mostly both. People are exhausted. They are malnourished. Children are sick.

In fact, hundreds of thousands of children in Rafah have a disability, medical condition or vulnerability that puts them in even greater jeopardy, and makes it that much more difficult for them to relocate, even if there was somewhere left to go.

In Rafah I saw children who had amputations, but were living in tents because hospitals are full. Those children – and many, many more – are now being told to go to zones such as Al Mawasi. The so called "safe zone" of Al Mawasi: where UNICEF reported on a little boy, Mustafa, who went to get some parsley for the



family dinner. Mustafa was shot in the head, and killed ... in the “safe zone” of Al Mawasi ... the zone where children and families from Rafah are now supposed to flee to.

This past weekend’s events in Gaza – the continued killing of children, more attacks from the warring parties, and now evacuation orders – yet again expose how parties to this conflict continue to utterly disregard the lives and protection of children and civilians.

That has to change. Indeed, this is the last chance for this to change.

Aid must flow. Hostages must be freed. Rafah must not be invaded. And children must no longer be killed.

We have pleaded and implored countless times; we do so once more. For the children of Rafah. We need a ceasefire, now.

## **VII. Secretary-General Urges Immediate Gaza Ceasefire and Warns Against Rafah Offensive: A Crucial Call for Peace in the Middle East**

*The following are the [remarks](#) of UN Secretary-General António Guterres to the press on 7 May.*

We are at a decisive moment for the Palestinian and Israeli people and for the fate of the entire region.

An agreement between the Government of Israel and the leadership of Hamas is essential to stop the unbearable suffering of Palestinians in Gaza and of the hostages and their families.

It would be tragic if weeks of intense diplomatic activity for peace in Gaza, yield no ceasefire. No release of hostages. And a devastating offensive in Rafah.

I reiterate my appeal for both parties to show the political courage and spare no effort to secure an agreement now. To stop the bloodshed. To free the hostages. And to help stabilize a region which is still at risk of explosion.

This is a crucial opportunity that the region – and indeed the world – cannot afford to miss. Yet things are moving in the wrong direction. I am disturbed and distressed by the renewed military activity in Rafah by the Israeli Defence Forces.

The closure of both the Rafah and Karem Shalom crossings is especially damaging to an already dire humanitarian situation. They must be re-opened immediately. Just to give an example; we risk running out of fuel this evening. I urge the Government of Israel to stop any escalation, and engage constructively in the ongoing diplomatic talks.

After more than 1,100 Israelis killed in the Hamas terror attacks of 7 October ... after more than 34,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza, haven’t we seen enough? Haven’t civilians suffered enough death and destruction? Make no mistake – a full-scale assault on Rafah would be a human catastrophe. Countless more civilian casualties. Countless more families forced to flee yet again – with nowhere safe to go. Because there is no safe place in Gaza.

Meanwhile, the repercussions will be felt far beyond, in the occupied West Bank, and across the region. Rafah is the epicenter of humanitarian operations in Gaza. Attacking Rafah will further upend our efforts to support people in dire humanitarian straits as famine looms. International humanitarian law is unequivocal: civilians must be protected – whether they leave Rafah or stay in the city. International humanitarian law must be respected by both parties.

I also remind Israel of its obligation to facilitate the safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian aid and staff into and across Gaza. Even the best friends of Israel are clear: An assault on Rafah would be a strategic mistake, a political calamity, and a humanitarian nightmare.

I appeal to all those with influence over Israel to do everything in their power to help avert even more tragedy. The international community has a shared responsibility to promote a humanitarian ceasefire, the unconditional release of all hostages, and a massive surge in life-saving aid. It is time for the parties to seize the opportunity and secure a deal for the sake of their own people. Thank you.

### **VIII. UNICEF Highlights Critical Fuel Shortage and Civilian Risks in Gaza**

*On 9 May, the following [statement](#) was issued by UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell.*

The humanitarian response of UNICEF and our partners — and thus the lives of all the children and their families in the Gaza Strip who depend on it — requires fuel. We need fuel to move lifesaving supplies – medicine, treatments for malnutrition, tents and water pipes – as well as staff to reach children and families in need. But the intensification of military operations in the Rafah area and the closure of key border crossings into southern Gaza have severed our access to fuel, threatening to grind humanitarian operations to a halt.

The limited essential infrastructure in Gaza that remains at least partially functional also depends on fuel to provide lifesaving services. This includes the remaining hospitals and primary health care centres, water desalination plants and water wells, sewage pumps and solid waste collection – all of which could run out of fuel within days, if not hours.

The situation is dire. If the Kerem Shalom and Rafah crossings are not reopened to fuel and humanitarian supplies, the consequences will be felt almost immediately: life support services for premature babies will lose power; children and families will become dehydrated or consume dangerous water; sewage will overflow and spread disease further. Simply put, lost time will soon become lost lives.

I strongly urge the relevant authorities to provide humanitarian actors with actionable measures and concrete assurances to facilitate safe and secure movement of humanitarian cargo, via all routes, into and within the Gaza Strip.

I am also deeply concerned about the movement of civilians in Gaza to unsafe areas. In response to evacuation orders in eastern Rafah, at least 80,000 people have reportedly fled the area, with many seeking shelter in Al-Mawasi and among the ruins of Khan Younis. We have been warning for months that Al-Mawasi is not a safe option. It is a narrow strip of beach on the coast that lacks the basic infrastructure – like toilets and running water – needed to sustain the population. Furthermore, most of the children in Rafah have already been displaced multiple times by the fighting, in direct contravention of their human rights and international humanitarian law.

Finally, we have also been warning for months that any military escalation in Rafah would lead to even greater human suffering. And now, we are seeing that play out in real-time. Gaza's children have suffered terribly in this war. More than 14,000 have reportedly been killed, according to the latest estimate by the Palestinian Ministry of Health. Thousands more have been injured or lost family members, loved ones or friends, while an estimated 17,000 children are unaccompanied or separated. Nearly all of Gaza's children have been exposed to the traumatic experiences of war, the consequences of which will last a lifetime. Many are badly injured, exhausted, sick, malnourished, or traumatised. With this latest escalation in Rafah, they must now endure more pain and suffering.

I implore the parties to the conflict to immediately cease hostilities, protect children and civilian infrastructure, release every remaining hostage, and give humanitarian actors the space and access necessary to safely roll out the massive, multi-agency response inside the Gaza Strip that is so desperately needed.

## **IX. South Africa Seeks Additional Provisional Measures to Address Escalating Genocide Concerns in Gaza**

*On 10 May, the International Court of Justice issued the following [press release](#).*

Today South Africa today filed an [urgent request](#) with the Court for the indication of additional provisional measures and the modification of provisional measures previously prescribed by the Court 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).

In its new request, South Africa states that the provisional measures previously indicated by the Court “are not capable of ‘fully address[ing]’ the changed circumstances and new facts on which [its] Request is founded”. It further states that

“[t]he situation brought about by the Israeli assault on Rafah, and the extreme risk it poses to humanitarian supplies and basic services into Gaza, to the survival of the Palestinian medical system, and to the very survival of Palestinians in Gaza as a group, is not only an escalation of the prevailing situation, but gives rise to new facts that are causing irreparable harm to the rights of the Palestinian people in Gaza.”.

South Africa requests the Court to indicate further provisional measures and modify the previous provisional measures, pursuant to Article 41 of the Statute of the Court and Articles 73 (1), 74 (1), 75 (1) and (3) and/or 76 (1) of the Rules of Court, for “the protection of the Palestinian people in Gaza from grave and irreparable violations of their rights, and of South Africa’s rights, under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.”

## **X. At Emergency Special Session, General Assembly Overwhelmingly Backs Membership of Palestine to United Nations, Urges Security Council Support Bid**

*On 10 May, during its resumed tenth emergency special session, the General Assembly adopted the following resolution ([A/RES/ES-10/23](#)).*

### **ES-10/23. Admission of new Members to the United Nations**

*The General Assembly,*

*Guided* by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and stressing in this regard the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples,

*Recalling* its relevant resolutions, including its resolutions concerning the question of Palestine, including, inter alia, resolution [ES-10/22](#) of 12 December 2023,

*Recalling also* the relevant resolutions of the Security Council,

*Recalling further* its resolution [2625 \(XXV\)](#) of 24 October 1970, in which it affirmed, inter alia, the duty of every State to promote, through joint and separate action, realization of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples,

*Stressing* the importance of maintaining and strengthening international peace founded upon freedom, equality, justice and respect for fundamental human rights,

*Reaffirming* its resolution [3236 \(XXIX\)](#) of 22 November 1974 and all relevant resolutions, including resolution [78/192](#) of 19 December 2023, reaffirming the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to their independent State of Palestine,

*Reaffirming also* the principle, in line with the Charter, of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force,

*Stressing* the need for respect for and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

*Reaffirming* its resolutions [43/176](#) of 15 December 1988 and [77/25](#) of 30 November 2022 and all relevant resolutions regarding the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, which, inter alia, stress the need for the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination, including the right to their independent State, and the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

*Reaffirming its unwavering support*, in accordance with international law, for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) of 23 December 2016, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, and the Arab Peace Initiative, and for the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders,

*Recalling* its relevant resolutions on the status of Palestine in the General Assembly, including its resolution [3210 \(XXIX\)](#) of 14 October 1974, resolution [3237 \(XXIX\)](#) of 22 November 1974, resolution [43/177](#) of 15 December 1988, resolution [52/250](#) of 7 July 1998, resolution [67/19](#) of 29 November 2012 and resolution [73/5](#) of 16 October 2018,

*Noting* that the State of Palestine is a party to many instruments concluded under the auspices of the United Nations and has joined several specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations as a full member,

*Aware* that the State of Palestine is a full member of the League of Arab States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Group of Asia-Pacific States and the Group of 77 and China,

*Having examined* the special report of the Security Council to the General Assembly,

*Stressing* its conviction that the State of Palestine is fully qualified for membership in the United Nations in accordance with Article 4 of the Charter,

*Noting* the widespread affirmations of support of Members of the United Nations for the admission of the State of Palestine to membership in the United Nations,

*Expressing deep regret and concern* that, on 18 April 2024, one negative vote by a permanent member of the Security Council prevented the adoption of the draft resolution supported by 12 members of the Council recommending the admission of the State of Palestine to membership in the United Nations,

*Recalling* that membership in the United Nations is open to all peace-loving States which accept the obligations contained in the Charter and, in the judgment of the Organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations,

1. *Determines* that the State of Palestine is qualified for membership in the United Nations in accordance with Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations and should therefore be admitted to membership in the United Nations;
2. *Accordingly recommends* that the Security Council reconsider the matter favourably, in the light of this determination and of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 28 May 1948, and in strict conformity with Article 4 of the Charter;
3. *Decides*, on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent, to adopt the modalities set out in the annex to the present resolution for the participation of the State of Palestine in the sessions and work of

- the General Assembly and the international conferences convened under the auspices of the Assembly or other organs of the United Nations, as well as in United Nations conferences;
4. *Requests* the Economic and Social Council, insofar as the rights concerned could be exercised by a non-member of the Council, and other relevant organs, specialized agencies, organizations and entities within the United Nations system to apply the above-mentioned modalities;
  5. *Reaffirms* the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to their independent State of Palestine;
  6. *Stresses* that compliance with and respect for the Charter and international law is a cornerstone of peace and security in the region;
  7. *Calls for* renewed and coordinated efforts by the international community aimed at achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in accordance with international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, and the Arab Peace Initiative, and reaffirming in this regard its unwavering support for the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;
  8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the measures necessary to implement the present resolution;
  9. *Decides* to adjourn the tenth emergency special session temporarily and to authorize the President of the General Assembly at its most recent session to resume its meeting upon request from Member States.

*49th plenary meeting  
10 May 2024*

## **XI. The world must not abandon the mothers of Gaza, says UNFPA Executive Director**

*On 10 May, UNFPA Executive Director Natalia Kanem published the following [article](#).*

As millions of children and families celebrate their mothers, my thoughts turn to the pregnant women and new mothers our teams at UNFPA, the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency, support in more than 130 countries around the world. And I hold in my heart all those who, tragically, will never live to see their newborns.

More than 800 women a day – one woman every two minutes – die needless deaths from entirely preventable complications of pregnancy and childbirth. The situation is particularly dire for women and girls caught up in the world’s escalating crises and conflicts. Globally, more than half of all maternal deaths take place in countries affected by humanitarian crisis or fragility.

In Gaza, women face appalling conditions before, during and after birth. At a moment when new life is beginning, what should be a moment of joy is being overshadowed by death, destruction and despair. Severely limited access to health services and emergency obstetric care put the lives of women and newborns at risk.

Today, major hospitals lie in ruins across Gaza and not a single health facility is fully operational following more than 440 attacks on health care since the war began in October.

At the Al-Helal Al-Emirati Maternity Hospital, one of Gaza’s few remaining health facilities and now the main facility for pregnant women in Rafah, at the time of writing there are only five beds for deliveries and around 60 deliveries every day. Women hoping to give birth on the ward are told to bring their own mattress and pillow.

“We are delivering babies nonstop,” says midwife Samira Hosny Qeshta. “We tell the woman who has just given birth: we need the bed. Get up and sit on a chair.”

Most women have had no prenatal care, she says. They just arrive at the hospital hoping for the best. Many are suffering from infections, due to the unhygienic living conditions in the overcrowded camps, where hundreds of people may share a single toilet and there is a lack of clean water and hygiene supplies.

“We live in a tent, and every time it rains the tent floods, and our beds get wet,” says Suhad. She is nine months pregnant and scheduled for a C-section. Hours later, she will be back in the tent.

“It will be extremely difficult after the birth,” she says. “From the physical pain to the ice cold – and there are no clothes for the baby. What has she done to be born into a situation like this?”

Even if their babies are delivered safely, thousands of women like Suhad face the inevitable question: What next? How will they keep their newborn clean, warm, fed, alive?

Many of these mothers are themselves too dehydrated and malnourished to breastfeed their children, and there is no formula to be had.

UNFPA has delivered reproductive health kits that have enabled safe births for more than 20,000 women in Gaza. We have set up a mobile maternity clinic in Rafah, with two more on the way. Hundreds of UNFPA-trained midwives are supporting pregnant women and new mothers unable to access a health clinic or hospital.

We have also distributed hygiene supplies, diapers, baby clothes, blankets and other essential items to thousands of new mothers. Yet all of this is just a drop in an ocean of need.

The world must not abandon the mothers of Gaza. They, their newborns, and all civilians must be protected and their needs met. Hospitals and health workers must never be targets.

From time immemorial, cultures across the globe have honoured the sacredness of motherhood. On this Mother’s Day, let us pay tribute to that sacred bond by remembering all the women who create, protect and nurture life, even under the most catastrophic circumstances.

The mothers in flooded tents or fleeing bombs. The mothers of hostages still waiting for their families to be made whole. The mothers and newborns fighting for their lives in overcrowded hospital wards without adequate medicines or supplies.

They need life-saving health services and support. They need dignity. Above all, they need peace. This war must end now.

## **XII. Threats against the ICC promote a culture of impunity, say UN experts**

*On 10 May, 45 UN experts issued the following [press release](#).*

UN experts\* today expressed utter dismay over statements made by United States and Israeli officials threatening to retaliate against the International Criminal Court (ICC), its officials and members of their families.

“At a time when the world should unite to end the terrible bloodshed in Gaza and seek justice for those unlawfully killed, injured, traumatised, or taken hostage, since 7 October, it is distressing to see State officials threatening to retaliate against a Court for pursuing international justice,” the experts said.

On Friday, 4 May, the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) denounced statements that “threaten to retaliate against the Court or against Court personnel” for actions taken by the Prosecutor. The OTP’s statement reminded all individuals that threats of retaliation may amount to an offense against the administration of justice under Article 70 of the Rome Statute.



“It is shocking to see countries that consider themselves champions of the rule of law trying to intimidate an independent and impartial international tribunal to thwart accountability,” the experts said.

“Threats of retaliatory action violate human rights norms against attacks on justice personnel and exceed the accepted limits of freedom of expression. We call on all States to respect the Court’s independence as a judicial institution and protect the independence and impartiality of those who work within the Court.”

The experts recalled that politicians and public officials play an important role in shaping the media agenda, public debate and opinion. As a result, ethical behaviour and attitudes on their part, including in their public communications, are essential for promoting the rule of law, protection of human rights, and for ensuring public trust in democratic systems of governance, they warned.

In recent weeks, authorities in the United States and Israel have made inflammatory statements concerning the ICC, characterising the Prosecutor’s potential actions as “lawless,” “disgraceful,” and any possible warrants as “an outrageous assault” and “an abomination”. Such comments have persisted for more than a week amid reports that Congressional leaders in the United States are preparing possible retaliatory action, including sanctions on individuals who work for the Court and efforts to de-fund the ICC, should arrest warrants be issued against Israeli officials, and threats from the Israeli Finance Minister to also withhold funds from the Palestinian Authority.

The experts recalled that the ICC has the mandate to investigate and prosecute individuals for the grave international crimes of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

The Court’s judges have authorised the ICC Prosecutor to investigate crimes committed on the territory of the State of Palestine since 2014 by any individual—whether Palestinian, Israeli, or another nationality—and any such crimes committed by Palestinian nationals, including crimes that took place inside Israel. The ICC Prosecutor has stated that his ongoing investigation includes recent events in occupied Gaza and West Bank.

“A majority of the world’s countries support the Court,” they said. “The ICC’s role is more crucial than ever. Impeding the work of the Court and its Prosecutor will be detrimental, not only for accountability in the occupied Palestinian territory but for international justice as a whole.”

The experts have been in touch with Israel and the United States about these concerns.

**\*The experts:** Margaret Satterthwaite, Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers; Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967; Ben Saul, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism; Cecilia M Bailliet, Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity; Siobhán Mullally, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; Paula Gaviria Betancur, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons; Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; George Katrougalos, Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order; Bernard Duhaime, Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence; Marcos A. Orellana, Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes; Gina Romero, Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association; Ashwini K.P., Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; Graeme Reid, Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity; Surya Deva, Special Rapporteur on the right to development; Aua Baldé (Chair-Rapporteur), Gabriella Citroni (Vice Chairperson), Angkhana Neelapaijit, Grażyna Baranowska, Ana Lorena Delgadillo Pérez, Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; Tomoya Obokata, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences; Astrid Puentes, Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment; Farida Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on the right to education; Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation; Dorothy Estrada Tanck (Chair), Claudia Flores, Ivana Krstić, Haina Lu,



and Laura Nyirinkindi (Vice-Chair), Working group on discrimination against women and girls; Jose Francisco Calí Tzay, Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples; Nicolas Levrat, Special Rapporteur on Minority issues; Alexandra Xanthaki, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; Mary Lawlor, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing; Richard Bennett, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan; Matthew Gillett (Chair-Rapporteur), Priya Gopalan (Vice-Chair on Follow-Up), Miriam Estrada-Castillo, and Mumba Malila, Working Group on arbitrary detention; Reem Alsalem, Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences; Barbara G. Reynolds (Chair), Bina D'Costa, Dominique Day, Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent; Olivier De Schutter, Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights; Anaïs Marin, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus

### **XIII. The war in Gaza has become a moral stain on the conscience of our collective humanity, says UN Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator**

*Following are the [opening remarks](#) of Joyce Msuya, Assistant-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, delivered at the Ninth Conference on Effective Partnership for Better Humanitarian Aid on 12 May.*

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

*Asalaam aleikum.* I am honoured to speak with you today and would like to thank the Government of Kuwait and the International Islamic Charitable Organisation for their steadfast support to people caught in crises worldwide.

Their leadership in convening this conference for the ninth time is a testament to their determination to reduce suffering around the world. And it comes at a critical time for the people of Gaza.

The war in Gaza has become a moral stain on the conscience of our collective humanity. As we gather here today, the war in Gaza, now in its eighth month, has entered yet another horrifying phase.

Despite repeated appeals, Israel moved ahead with its military offensive in Rafah and seized control of the Gaza side of the Rafah and Kerem Shalom border crossings earlier this week.

As warned, this has triggered new and more challenges. These crossings are a lifeline for the delivery of humanitarian aid to Palestinians in need. This spells further catastrophe for more than a million people who have been forcibly displaced to Rafah to escape fighting, disease and hunger elsewhere. Seven months of fighting have turned Gaza into a hellscape for millions trapped under incessant bombardment.

The war has killed some 35,000 people; 70,000 more are wounded or missing, with many more trapped under the rubble. For months, women and children have been killed at a rate that exceeds any war in this century.

And those who've escaped death and injury now risk losing their lives because of a lack of food, safe water, medicine and healthcare.

Every day, scores of women give birth in horrifying conditions, often without anesthesia or medical aid, as bombs explode around them. Mothers watch their babies die in their arms because they don't have enough milk to keep them alive. And children are dying because they don't have enough food or water.

What aid makes it into Gaza is being delivered by humanitarian workers who are forced to navigate checkpoints, unexploded bombs, lawlessness and intense fighting – at tremendous risk to their own lives.

The courage of the frontline responders as they risk everything to reduce the suffering is astonishing. Doctors are refusing to abandon patients, putting their lives on the line as medical facilities are attacked. And humanitarian workers continue to work for others even as they flee their own homes.

For our part, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – or OCHA – continues to do everything it can.

We are in daily access negotiations with the parties. We are coordinating the humanitarian response. We are supporting the humanitarian community. We are advocating for the protection of civilians and respect for the laws of war at the highest level. We have pulled people out of the rubble and repatriated the bodies of aid workers, including those working for World Central Kitchen and Médecins Sans Frontières who were killed serving those in need.

OCHA also works on behalf of dozens of UN agencies and NGOs to share the coordinates of humanitarian convoys and premises so that the warring sides will not harm them. And we continue to lead humanitarian missions to northern Gaza.

We have also worked since the beginning of the conflict to continually assess the needs of the Palestinian people, which is why we're appealing for \$2.8 billion to support more than three million people in Gaza and the West Bank over the next eight months.

This war – which has caused such pain, suffering and grief – must end so that the Palestinian people can begin to confront the trauma inflicted on them.

I echo the Secretary-General's longstanding call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, and the immediate and unconditional release of hostages.

Even in the absence of a ceasefire, there is still much we can do given the right conditions. The UN and our partners, many of whom are in this room today, deliver aid in conflict zones around the world. Gaza should be no different.

To reach people in need, we need multiple, reliable entry points for aid. We need law and order. And humanitarian workers must be protected, and not attacked. Until we have safe routes, the flow of aid simply will not match the enormous scale of the catastrophe.

We also need Israeli authorities to abide by their obligations to facilitate safe, rapid and unimpeded access for humanitarian aid and humanitarian workers. This includes for UNRWA, which has been the backbone of the humanitarian response in Gaza for decades and is best positioned to respond to the dire needs of the Palestinian people.

Here, allow me to salute the Government of Kuwait, which, along with other important partners, came to the support of UNRWA financially and diplomatically, allowing UNRWA to continue its critical role.

Despite the immense challenges, we have strengthened our partnerships with local organizations, working hand-in-hand with our Palestinian partners to support those in need.

This has been particularly crucial when it comes to organizations led by Palestinian women working on the frontline. These organizations have access that others simply do not. We must do everything in our power to continue to support their heroic efforts to reach Gaza's women and girls, who have been forced to bear the war's very worst horrors.

When I think about what effective humanitarian partnerships are built on, I think of the shared values that define and unite the humanitarian community – our impartiality, our neutrality and our independence, even in the most politicized conflicts.

And I think of how these values emerge from a shared acknowledgment of our common humanity, a recognition that those most vulnerable to the depravities of war – the women, children, elderly and those with disabilities – must remain our focus.

So, as we gather here today, let us recall these shared values and recognize their importance – not only in meeting the urgency of today’s growing needs, but also in building and strengthening the partnerships that will be needed to rebuild Gaza once the war ends.

There is complex and fraught work ahead of us. But if we can hold onto the values that unite us as humanitarians, then I know we will navigate these difficulties the best we can, in ways that ensure we continue to reach people whose lives have been shattered by a war of unimaginable horror.

I once again would like to extend my deepest appreciation to our hosts – the Government of Kuwait and the International Islamic Charitable Organisation – for bringing us together in this crucial moment for humanity.

Thank you.

#### **XIV. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights calls for ceasefire in Gaza and release of hostages**

*Below is the [statement](#) issued by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on 12 May.*

I am deeply distressed by the fast-deteriorating conditions in Gaza as Israeli forces intensify airstrikes on Jabaliya and Beit Lahiya in northern Gaza and in parts of Central Gaza. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are fleeing Rafah after the Israeli Defence Forces ordered further evacuations from the southern city, leading afresh to massive displacement of an already profoundly traumatized population. I am also concerned by reports of indiscriminate rocket fire from Gaza.

Since 6 May, when the IDF issued an evacuation order to Palestinians in eastern Rafah, more than 278,000 people have been displaced. This includes people with disabilities, the chronically ill, older people, the injured, pregnant women, and many others who are physically unable to move without help.

The latest evacuation orders affect close to a million people in Rafah. So where should they go now?

*There is no safe place in Gaza!*

These exhausted, famished people, many of whom have been displaced many times already, have no good options. Other towns across Gaza, including Khan Younis, which is supposed to receive those who are being displaced from Rafah right now, have already been reduced to rubble, and remain under attack. These are not safe places.

I have repeatedly expressed my alarm about the catastrophic impact of a possible full-scale offensive on Rafah, including the possibility of further atrocity crimes. I can see no way that the latest evacuation orders, much less a full assault, in an area with an extremely dense presence of civilians, can be reconciled with the binding requirements of international humanitarian law and with the two sets of binding provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice.

At this desperate moment, exacerbated by acts impeding the entry of humanitarian aid in Gaza through the three crossings, there is a dire shortage of fuel, which is hindering everything – from the movement to distribution of food, operation of hospitals and emergency services, sewage treatment and telecommunications. I am also very worried about the safety of humanitarian workers in the affected areas.

*I reiterate. A full-scale offensive on Rafah cannot take place!*

All States with influence must do everything in their power to prevent it – to protect civilian lives.

I call on Israel and Palestinian armed groups urgently to agree to a ceasefire, and all hostages must be released at once.

## **XV. UNICEF Calls for Immediate Ceasefire as Hostilities Intensify in Rafah and North Gaza**

*On 14 May, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa Adele Khodr issued the following [statement](#) on intensifying hostilities in Rafah and North Gaza.*

The escalation of hostilities in Rafah and throughout the Gaza Strip has deepened the suffering of hundreds of thousands of children, who have endured an unrelenting nightmare for the past 218 days. We cannot accept their plight being livestreamed as collateral damage in a conflict they never chose.

Last week, a long-feared military operation began in Rafah, displacing over 448,000 people to unsafe areas like Al-Mawasi and Deir al Balah. Meanwhile, heavy bombardment and ground operations have spread to northern Gaza, leaving a trail of destruction in areas such as Jabaliya refugee camp and Beit Lahia. At least 64,000 people there have been forced to flee their devastated homes.

Civilians – already exhausted, malnourished, and facing numerous traumatic events – are now facing increased death, injury, and displacement among the ruins of their communities. The very humanitarian operations that became the only lifeline for the whole population across the Strip are threatened.

Since the start of the most recent escalation, UNICEF has been facing increased challenges to transport any assistance into the Gaza Strip. Fuel shortage remains a critical issue.

Major hospitals in the north within evacuation zones, including Kamal Adwan, Al Awda, and the Indonesian Hospital, find themselves in the crossfire, which severely disrupts the delivery of critical medical supplies and puts numerous lives at risk. Those at imminent risk of famine are now cut-off from any help.

I'm also very concerned about water infrastructure and access to clean water and sanitation across Gaza. In the north, vital wells have suffered great damage, while in Rafah at least eight facilities are down, impacting around 300,000 people, many of them children who will likely revert to contaminated water and become seriously ill. When water fails, children suffer the most.

Border crossings must be swiftly opened, and humanitarian organizations allowed to safely move and provide critical life-saving assistance upon which all children in Gaza depend. Failure to do so will lead to a tragedy even greater than what we have already witnessed – an outcome we must urgently work to avoid.

After over seven months of conflict, with tens of thousands of lives lost and countless appeals for ceasefire, the violence persists. It is crucial that weapons go silent and children's rights are respected. The children of Gaza, who have endured unimaginable horrors, deserve an immediate ceasefire and a chance for a peaceful future."

## **XVI. UN Secretary-General Appalled by Escalation of Military Activity in and around Rafah**

*The following [statement](#) was issued on 14 May by the Spokesman for UN Secretary-General António Guterres.*

The Secretary-General is appalled by the escalation of military activity in and around Rafah by the Israeli Defense Forces.

These developments are further impeding humanitarian access and worsening an already dire situation. At the same time, Hamas goes on firing rockets indiscriminately. Civilians must be respected and protected at all times, in Rafah and elsewhere in Gaza. For people in Gaza, nowhere is safe now.

The Secretary-General reiterates his urgent appeal for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and for the release of all hostages. He calls for the Rafah crossing to be reopened immediately and we must have unimpeded humanitarian access throughout Gaza.

## **XVII. The war in Gaza is an open wound that threatens to infect the entire region, warns UN Secretary-General**

*On 16 May, UN Secretary-General António Guterres delivered the following [remarks](#) at the Summit of the League of Arab States.*

*As salaam alaikum.*

Your Majesty, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain, thank you for your kind invitation and your warm hospitality.

Your Majesties, Your Royal Highnesses, Excellencies, Secretary-General Aboul Gheit,

I was born in Lisbon – a city that for centuries was part of Al-Andalus.

This was at a time when Cordoba was the centre of culture and civilization of the Iberian Peninsula, just as Baghdad was the centre of culture and civilization of the world – reaching out from the Chinese border to the Atlantic coast.

History moved on. And a number of transformations — cultural, economic, technological and military — changed the world to the detriment of the Arab people.

The majority of Arab countries were colonized.

It took decades of struggle for liberation – sometimes bloody wars – often with long periods of exploitation – and a legacy of lines arbitrarily drawn in the sand. But, today, once again, the world is changing and I see enormous potential in the Arab region. You have the resources. You have the culture. You have the people. But there is one core condition for success in today's world: unity.

Time and again, history has shown that divisions allow outsiders to intervene — promoting conflicts, stoking sectarian tensions and inadvertently fueling terrorism. These are obstacles to peaceful development and the well-being of your peoples.

Overcoming those obstacles requires breaking the vicious circle of division and foreign manipulation – and moving forward together to build a more peaceful and prosperous future for the people of the Arab world and beyond.

Excellencies,

We gather as hearts are breaking for Palestinians in Gaza. The war in Gaza is an open wound that threatens to infect the entire region. In its speed and scale, it is the deadliest conflict in my time as Secretary-General – for civilians, aid workers, journalists, and our own UN colleagues. Of course, nothing can justify the abhorrent 7 October terror attacks by Hamas. I reiterate my call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. And nothing can justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people. Yet the toll on civilians continues to escalate.

Entire families wiped out. Children traumatized and injured for life. People denied access to the very basics for human survival. A looming famine. Any assault on Rafah is unacceptable. It would inflict another surge of pain and misery when we need a surge in life-saving aid. It is time for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance throughout Gaza.

UNRWA remains the backbone of our operations in Gaza and a lifeline for Palestine refugees across the region. It needs full support and funding.

I am also deeply troubled by tensions in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem, with a spike in illegal Israeli settlements, settler violence, excessive use of force by Israeli Defense Forces, demolitions and evictions.

The only permanent way to end the cycle of violence and instability is through a two-state solution, Israel and Palestine living side-by-side in peace and security, with Jerusalem as the capital of both states.

The demographic and historical character of Jerusalem must be preserved, and the status quo at the Holy Sites must be upheld, in line with the special role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Excellencies,

Turning to Sudan, a devastating war has thrown half the country's population into a humanitarian freefall. One year on, thousands have been killed, and 18 million people are staring down the terrifying threat of famine.

I urge the international community to intensify its push for peace, and call on the warring parties to agree on a lasting ceasefire.

This should be followed by a political process that includes women's and youth groups.

I pledge the full support of the United Nations.

We must also protect the fragile political processes in Libya and Yemen.

As High Commissioner for Refugees, I witnessed the enormous generosity of the Syrian people. I am pained to see Syria now, with so much suffering and with parts of its territory occupied with several external actors involved.

I call on all Syrians to come together in a spirit of reconciliation, honouring the diversity of the Syrian people and respecting the human rights of all.

Excellencies,

We face other serious global crises.

The climate emergency; rising inequalities, poverty and hunger; crushing debt; and new technology – including artificial intelligence — that is running ahead of governance and guardrails.

We need deep reforms to the global multilateral system — from the Security Council to the international financial architecture — so they are truly universal and representative of today's realities.

The upcoming Summit of the Future is a pivotal opportunity to create momentum for a more networked and inclusive multilateralism.

I look forward to welcoming you to the Summit in New York in September.

Excellencies,

There is no better moment for the Arab region to come together.

Unity and solidarity throughout the Arab world would amplify the vital voice of the region and further boost your influence on the global stage.

It can help this region find peace, make the most of its enormous potential, and further contribute to the global good.

In all this work, you can count on the United Nations, and on me personally, for our support and partnership.

*Shukran.*

## **XVIII. UN Experts Urge Resumption of UNRWA Funding**

*On 17 May, 27 UN experts issued the following [press release](#).*

UN experts expressed disappointment today that some States have yet to reinstate funding weeks after an independent review showed a lack of evidence for partiality claims against the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

“The independent review ordered by the UN Secretary-General, following an increase of allegations since the onset of the military assault on Gaza in October 2023, has shown that the claim that significant numbers of UNRWA employees have ties with ‘terrorist organisations’ remains unsubstantiated,” the experts said.

They welcomed the review’s conclusions that UNRWA has a very developed approach to neutrality, with effective control mechanisms to address neutrality concerns.

“This indicates that UNRWA has yet again been targeted politically at critical moments—raising serious questions about accountability for the damage inflicted both on UNRWA and on the Palestinians in Gaza that the agency serves,” said the experts, recalling that other UN humanitarian and human rights bodies and mechanisms, including independent experts, have been subject to verbal and other attacks on their integrity and impartiality in the past several months.

The experts said decisions by various States to pause funds for UNRWA, following fallacious allegations that several staff were involved in the 7 October attacks in Israel, have already severely curtailed the agency’s operations in Gaza. No other entity has the capacity to deliver the scale and breadth of assistance that 2.2 million people in Gaza urgently need.

“We back the European Union’s call for those international donors holding out to resume funding to UNRWA,” they said. States should fully reinstate funding without delay.

“We recognise UNRWA’s determination to implement its mandate under unprecedented and enormous risks,” the experts said. “189 UNRWA staff have been killed in Israeli bombardments since 7 October 2023—the highest number of UN staff killed in any conflict since the UN’s founding in 1945.”

Multiple UNRWA facilities have been targeted, besieged and demolished by the Israeli military, in apparent violation of the principle of the inviolability of UN premises, the experts said. “At this existential time for millions of Palestinians in Gaza, who are enduring famine coupled with unfathomable humanitarian conditions, UN operations and facilities must be protected.”



Experts warn that 1.7 million people are internally displaced, mostly women and 600,000 children in the Rafah area alone, and they need food assistance, shelter, healthcare, education, water, sanitation and hygiene.

“It is imperative that once funding to UNRWA is reinstated to the fullest, UNRWA be fully recognised and protected both as a subsidiary body of the United Nations General Assembly, epitomising among others the permanent responsibility of the United Nations toward the Question of Palestine, and for its pivotal role in many areas of life of Palestinian refugees,” the experts said.

**The experts:** Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967; Dorothy Estrada Tanck (Chair), Laura Nyirinkindi (Vice-Chair), Claudia Flores, Ivana Krstić and Haina Lu, Working group on discrimination against women and girls; Jose Francisco Calí Tzay, Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples; Bernard Duhaime, Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence; Ashwini K.P. Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; Gina Romero, Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association; George Katrougalos, Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order; Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation; Elisa Morgera, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change; Nicolas Levrat, Special Rapporteur on Minority issues; Farida Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on the right to education; Mary Lawlor, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Tlaleng Mofokeng, Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; Margaret Satterthwaite, Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers; Cecilia M Bailliet, Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity; Alexandra Xanthaki, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; Olivier De Schutter, Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights; Claudia Mahler, Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons; Attiya Waris, Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights; Ben Saul, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism; Paula Gaviria Betancur, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons; Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Tomoya Obokata, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences; Reem Alsalem, Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences; Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression.

## **XIX. UN Palestinian Rights Committee commemorated the 76<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nakba**

*Below is the [Chair Summary](#) of the Panel discussion “1948-2024: The Ongoing Palestinian Nakba” held under the auspices of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) on 17 May at the UN Headquarters in New York.*

The [Panel discussion “1948-2024: The Ongoing Palestinian Nakba”](#) was held under the auspices of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) on 17 May in the ECOSOC Chamber, UN Headquarters in New York. The event focused on the historical context of the 1948 events that lead to the mass displacement of Palestinians, a process still ongoing, and the responsibilities of the United Nations since 1948. The [event also discussed the current situation in Gaza](#) and escalating Israeli violations of international law in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Participants also shared updates on solidarity movements across the world and on the support of the international community towards Palestinian rights, including under applicable international law and international humanitarian law.

In organizing this event, the Committee wished to highlight state responsibilities to address the situation faced by Palestinians since 1948 and brought forward testimonies on the recent atrocities committed during the latest Israel war on Gaza. The event also contributed to maintaining Palestinian memory and sharing the Palestinians people’s story with Member States and the public while highlighting obligations and avenues for action.

At the opening, the **Chair of the Committee, Ambassador Cheikh Niang (Senegal)**, reminded of the events of 1948 and subsequent years that led to the dispossession and displacement of approximately 750,000 Palestinians from their ancestral land, a process that is still ongoing 76 years later. He also recalled that the war in Gaza had caused suffering unparalleled in recent history, with close to 40,000 Palestinians killed and almost 80,000 injured. The Chair drew a comparison between the events of 1948 and the current situation in the Palestinian Occupied Territory. While international attention was focussing on Gaza, Israeli attacks on Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem – by its security forces and armed illegal settlers – had increased. Demolitions and expropriations of Palestinian land and properties, arbitrary detentions of Palestinian civilians, including children, and the “Judaization” process of East Jerusalem were all different facets of an all-encompassing ongoing process that had affected the Palestinian people over generations.

The Israeli response to the atrocities conducted by Hamas and other groups on 7 October 2023 had been disproportionate and indiscriminate, putting the international rights-based system under intense threat as the perpetrators of grave breaches were not held accountable. Conflict had been spreading in the Middle East, the Security Council appeared paralyzed, and Member States divided. Ambassador Niang called on all the various actors and concerned parties – citizens of their States, civil society organizations, Governments, and international organizations – to play their part, working together, to achieve a lasting and immediate ceasefire.

The Committee vowed to continue to advocate for those rights in the General Assembly and the Security Council, through events, social media, publications, the development of capacities of the Palestinian Government, international conferences, panels and delegation visits. The State of Palestine had recently been officially recognized by all Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member countries. This wave of support would hopefully carry towards the rest of the region and beyond. The Chair also called upon the international community – Member States and civil society alike – to redouble their efforts to end the Israeli occupation, end the ongoing Nakba, and bring to reality the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and independence, and a just resolution to the plight of Palestine refugees.

The representative of the State of Palestine, the **Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine** to the United Nations in New York, **Minister Riyad Mansour**, stated that the Nakba represented a personal tragedy for each Palestinian person, and family, but also a shared ordeal, an historic injustice endured by a whole nation. It had taken 75 years for the UN to recognize and commemorate the original Nakba, but this process of dispossession had never stopped. At this time in history, the Palestinians in Gaza only had the choice between displacement, subjugation or death. However, he underscored, there was now a universal recognition of the plight of the Palestinian people, and soon, it would be matched by universal recognition of Palestinian statehood. He added that there was a global consensus to end the Israeli occupation and to fulfil the realization of Palestinian rights.

Participants then heard poems read by [Ms. Zeina Azzam](#), a Palestinian-American writer, poet, editor and community activist. In a moving and emotional intervention, Ms. Azzam touched upon the history of her family and of many others who had to flee Palestine during the Nakba. She recalled that thousands of children had died during the ongoing Israeli assault on Gaza. In one of her poems, she said she was inspired by the testimony of a child in Gaza who had asked his parents to write his name on his leg, so that he could be identified if he had to die.

During the panel presentations, [Mr. Ardi Imseis](#), Assistant Professor and Academic Director at Queen’s University, Ottawa, [spoke of the UN responsibility in the original Nakba](#), and towards generations of Palestinians for the loss of their homes and identity. The Nakba had not been a single event but a protracted structure of dispossession, with no concrete actions to reverse its effects taken by those responsible for its inception. He described UN resolution 181 of 29 November 1947, which had recommended the partition of Palestine, as having violated international law because partition could never be legal without the freely expressed consent of the governed. The terms of the partition revealed thus a contempt for the principle of self-determination of peoples as applied to Palestine as a Class A mandated territory, rooted upon the idea of majority democratic rule.

This resolution had been passed at a time when Western countries, with settler-colonialist mindsets, dominated the United Nations. Palestinians thus became collateral victims of the horrors of the Holocaust against the Jewish people during World War II, and hundreds of years of persecution of Jewish populations on the territory of those same countries. Regrettably, these same states then had supported Israel’s multifaceted assaults

on Palestinians over the following decades. Recalling the statement by Secretary-General Guterres that the events of 7 October had not happened in a vacuum, Mr. Imseis added that the current war on Gaza was the latest aggression in a process that never ended since the 1947 Partition Plan.

The second panellist, **Ms. Karamah Kuemmerle**, Assistant Professor at Harvard Medical School and co-founder of Doctors against Genocide, enumerated different aspects of the ongoing Nakba against Palestinians, from mass demolition and expulsion of communities to the expansion of Israeli settlements on Palestinian lands, executions, check points and detentions. She stated that it had been no surprise that Gaza, the biggest Palestinian city in the world, was the one that had been suffered the most brutal and most frequent attacks. The failure to recognize that a genocide was being perpetuated, despite overwhelming concrete evidence and documentation of its planning and implementation, allowed its perpetrators to feel empowered and act with impunity. As such, the recognition of the Nakba as a genocide stood as a cornerstone in South Africa's case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Palestinians would never stop asking for their inalienable rights, she averred. During her work with Doctors Against Genocide, Ms. Kuemmerle had witnessed that Israelis were opposed to the two-State solution because they considered Palestinian existence as a threat to their own. Israelis consistently demanded for permanent reassurances of their security from Palestinians, without consideration for the security of Palestinians themselves. She added that this one-sided view prevented Palestinians to advocate for their rights, which was one of the main issues behind the creation of her organisation. Physicians were used to dealing with trauma and considered that life was sacred for all humans, independently from their ethnicity or religion. In Palestine, medical staff had measured the gravity of this trauma and witnessed that there was no access to health nor security anywhere. No people, no community must ever endure what Palestinians suffered since the Nakba and were still suffering. She spoke of the readiness of the medical community to support humanitarian efforts and the need to secure a safe passage for them, particularly those trapped in Rafah.

The third panellist, [Ms. Phyllis Bennis](#), is a Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, and international advisor at Jewish Voice for Peace. In her presentation, she recalled that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide had been adopted in 1948, the same year when both the Nakba in Palestine and Apartheid in South Africa began. She described how both processes had been enabled by Western colonial interests. In particular, she pointed out that the United States had provided a similar kind of support to the Apartheid regime in South Africa to that it has and continues to provide to Israel. Thus, by providing weapons that have been used in the ongoing Nakba in Gaza the United States has been complicit in a genocide. In addition, the United States' regular use of its veto in the Security Council gave Israel the impunity to attempt to destroy Gaza and force its population to flee. She called for a similar pressure by Member States that led to the sanctions on South Africa.

However, Ms. Bennis highlighted, the recent ICJ ruling recognizing the right of the Palestinians to be protected for possibly genocidal acts in Gaza was a step in the right direction while public opinion across the United States had shifted in an unprecedented manner, and the unabated support for Israel among Government officials and politicians could lead to repercussions in the 2024 US elections.

During the following **discussion**, representatives of Member States and Regional Organizations took the floor. **South Africa** stated that there was growing evidence of the genocidal intent of the Israeli operation in Gaza. Other Member States, including **China, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Türkiye**, reaffirmed their call upon Israel to stop the occupation of Palestinian territory, and called for an immediate ceasefire. Speakers stressed that the Gaza conflict had so far claimed tens of thousands of lives, and maimed many more, leaving millions of Palestinians caught in an unprecedented humanitarian emergency while Israel was still pressing on with its military attack on Rafah. After 76 years since the original Nakba, the right to self-determination of Palestinian people remained unfulfilled and the question of the Palestinian refugees unresolved. Member States warned against the growing resistance to recognize the Palestinians' basic rights, including their rights of return and called for the implementation of relevant GA resolutions. Furthermore, Member States expressed their satisfaction with the recent GA vote that granted Palestine an enhanced participation in the UN General Assembly.

The representative of the Arab League, League of (LAS) stressed that the international community's primary mission was to prevent a new Nakba, whose aim was to displace Palestinians out of Gaza into other countries in the region. Stressing the need to explore mechanisms to prevent it, he thanked all those Member States who had supported the recent General Assembly resolution towards the eventual admission of Palestine as a fully-fledged member. He called on the countries who had abstained to reconsider their position and follow the increasing number of members of the international community who support Palestine, especially in light with the growing recognition of Palestine as a state in Latin America and the Caribbean. Calling for stronger accountability for the crimes perpetuated in Palestine, the representative of the LAS also welcomed the recent cases brought by South Africa before the ICJ and the other legal proceedings in support of Palestinian rights.

**Minister Mansour** praised the resilience of the Palestinian people and their determination to continue their struggle for the attainment of their inalienable rights. In the ensuing discussions, speakers and attendees called for the Nakba to be categorized as an act of genocide and to hold its perpetrators accountable. The question of Palestine must stay on top of the agenda of the international community and states must ensure that their relationship with Israel reflected their opposition to the ongoing Nakba, by taking concrete measures to put pressure on Israeli authorities. Moreover, public opinion around the world had been shifting toward greater support for Palestinian rights and civil society needed to put more pressure on their own governments to call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and to keep funding UNRWA which remained essential for the life of millions of Palestine refugees.

In the closing session **Ambassador Niang**, highlighted how the commemoration of another year of the Palestinian Nakba had provided an important opportunity for reflection and for mobilization in pursuit of a just solution that would underpin peace and security for Palestinians, Israelis and the region as a whole.

*\*\*\*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.*

## **XX. OCHA appeals to the Security Council to end the “humanitarian catastrophe” in Gaza**

*On 20 May, Edem Wosornu, OCHA Director of Operations and Advocacy, on behalf of Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, delivered the following [briefing](#) to the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Rafah.*

Mr. President, Members of the Security Council,

Thank you for this opportunity to brief you on the humanitarian situation in [Gaza](#), which has only grown more urgent amid ongoing Israeli ground operations in and around Rafah since 6 May.

To be frank, we are running out of words to describe what is happening in Gaza. We have described it as a catastrophe, a nightmare, as hell on earth. It is all of these, and worse.

And living conditions continue to deteriorate as a result of heavy fighting, particularly in Jabalaya and eastern Rafah, as well as Israeli bombardment from air, land and sea.

The number of casualties continues to increase by the day. According to the Gaza Ministry of Health, more than 35,000 people have now been killed in the violence, and more than 79,000 injured. Around 17,000 children are unaccompanied or remain separated from their families.

Let me note here also the Israeli military announcement last week that it had recovered the bodies of four Israeli hostages from Gaza. It is estimated that 128 Israeli and foreign nationals remain captive in Gaza, including fatalities whose bodies are withheld.

And as you know, the extreme levels of violence have not spared the UN and humanitarian community. The Special Coordinator [Tor Wennesland] has just updated on the death of our UN colleague on the 13th of May: Yet another UN staff member was killed and another seriously injured when their UN vehicle came under attack while en route to the European Gaza Hospital in Khan Younis. We lost a father, a husband and a dedicated colleague with a distinguished career. This brings the number of UN staff killed in Gaza since the escalation of hostilities, again as has been said, to 193 staff.

We find it impossible to accept that people endeavouring to save lives are instead losing their lives.

Particularly as 1.1 million people face catastrophic levels of hunger and Gaza remains on the brink of famine. As of 18 May, just 10 bakeries are operational out of a total of 16 being supported by our humanitarian partners. However, it is expected that these will run out of stock and fuel within days if no additional supplies are received. The other six bakeries, all of which are in southern Gaza, have been forced to cease operation due to either shortages of fuel or because of ongoing hostilities.

The health-care system in Gaza is also under impossible strain. In Rafah, 21 medical points, four primary health-care centres, and four hospitals are now inaccessible. In the North, two hospitals, five primary health-care centres, and 16 medical points are inaccessible. These facilities all provided critical medical services, including trauma care, non-communicable disease management, kidney dialysis, and maternal and child health care.

An estimated 14,000 critical patients currently require medical evacuation out of Gaza. Prior to the closure of the Rafah crossing, medical evacuations had reached approximately 50 patients per day. This means nearly 700 patients have not been evacuated since the closure of the Rafah crossing.

Mr. President,

Since October 2023, 75 per cent of the population in Gaza – 1.7 million people – has been forcibly displaced within Gaza, many of them up to four or five times, including as a result of repeated IDF-issued evacuation instructions.

Some reports have also suggested that many thousands of Gazans may have crossed into Egypt and more are trying. And in the past two weeks, more than 800,000 people have been displaced from Rafah into other areas of Gaza, in search of safety. As the conflict persists and lives are threatened, civilians must be allowed to seek protection.

I must also emphasize, unequivocally, that persons forcibly displaced within or from Gaza must be guaranteed the right to voluntarily return, as international law demands.

Mr. President, distinguished Members of the Security Council,

Today, the once over-crowded camps and emergency shelters in Rafah have now largely emptied, with the majority of the displaced seeking refuge in Khan Younis and Deir al Balah.

But the situation that people are finding on their arrival at new sites in these areas is horrendous. There is exceedingly limited existing infrastructure – they lack adequate latrines, water points, drainage and shelter.

Civilians' essential needs must be met. For evacuated civilians, this means ensuring, to the greatest practicable extent, proper shelter and satisfactory minimum conditions of hygiene, health, safety and nutrition, and that members of the same family are not separated.

These appalling conditions leave serious doubt as to compliance with these basic obligations.

Mr. President,

The Rafah ground incursion is magnifying the impediments to an already fragile and beleaguered aid operation, as again has been said.

As of 17 May, the Rafah crossing remains closed and inaccessible for humanitarian cargo, fuel and personnel movement. This has prevented the entry of 82,000 metric tonnes of supplies, including critical food items and medicines.

Around 654,000 litres of fuel have entered the strip since the Rafah operation began on the 6th of May. This means on average we are receiving just one quarter of the fuel allocations that we had prior to 6th of May, further impacting the functioning of bakeries, hospitals, water wells and other critical infrastructure.

The crossing at Kerem Shalom – which has been the main entry point for critical aid – remains open in principle but extremely difficult for aid organizations to access from the Gaza side due to hostilities, challenging logistical conditions, and complex coordination procedures.

Among the northern land routes, Erez crossing – opened from 1st to 9th May – has been closed since. The newly-opened Erez West, known as As Aiafa or Zikim, is now being used for limited quantities of aid, but now areas in the vicinity of this crossing are also under evacuation orders.

We welcome the first aid shipment delivered on 17 May via the floating dock set up by the United States. The maritime corridor hosted by Cyprus in line with resolution 2720 (2023) and with support from other Member States is an important adjunct to a comprehensive humanitarian operation in Gaza. But as we have stressed, land routes remain the most viable and effective way to deliver the scale of aid needed.

Mr. President,

The United Nations and our partners are committed to staying and delivering in Gaza, wherever civilians are in need, and we are configuring our operations to recent population movements. The United Nations Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator [Sigrid Kaag] is in active engagement with [relevant] parties to accelerate the provision of humanitarian relief consignments to Gaza through all possible routes. However, due to the current closure of the Rafah crossing and limited access via Kerem Shalom and other crossings, right now we lack the supplies and fuel to provide any meaningful level of support.

I can take you and the Council Members through the list of things we need. You have heard them before:

One: The toll of death, injury, destruction in Gaza is utterly unconscionable. We demand that civilians, their housing, and the vital infrastructure they depend on be protected, as international humanitarian law requires. All feasible precautions *must* be taken to avoid and minimize civilian harm.

Two: We need the facilitation of rapid, unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief into and within Gaza – also as a matter of international humanitarian law. All available access points must be open and kept open for a sustained period to allow aid to enter at scale.

Three: We also need to be assured of the protection of humanitarian and UN staff, all of whom are working under extreme conditions in Gaza. This requires the parties to take constant care throughout military operations, which the agreed humanitarian notification system aims to maximize. It also requires enabling a stable communications network.

Four: We need adequate funding, particularly for UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, which is the central pillar of our aid operation. As of 20 May, the 2024 Flash Appeal is only 25 per cent funded. We urge donors to step forward with the funding [we need]. We are grateful for the funding already received.

But in all honesty, Mr. President, Members of the Council,



At this stage, and as has been said, it is only a humanitarian ceasefire and a halt in the ground incursion in Rafah that will fully protect civilians, create the conditions for humanitarians to work to provide assistance at the scale required, and stem the endlessly deepening toll of this travesty in Gaza.

So, our principal call today is for all parties, as a matter of urgency, to make genuine progress towards ceasefire, for the release of all remaining hostages, and for the Security Council and all Member States to use their influence to bring this humanitarian catastrophe to an end. Thank you.

## **XXI. UN Special Coordinator Highlights Urgent Humanitarian Needs and Calls for Ceasefire in Gaza at Security Council Briefing**

*Below is the [briefing](#) of UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland delivered to the UN Security Council on the Situation in the Middle East on 20 May (as delivered).*

Mr. President,

Members of the Security Council,

Thank you for inviting me to address the Council on recent developments in Rafah, where the situation is becoming increasingly desperate and dangerous for the already besieged population.

Regrettably we face yet another precipice of further catastrophe in Gaza amid stalled talks between the parties to secure the release of all hostages held in Gaza and a ceasefire to provide much needed relief to the civilian population. Just two weeks ago negotiations were ongoing in Cairo with the support of Egypt, Qatar and the United States, however, these talks ended on 9 May without agreement.

I urge the parties to redouble all efforts and return to the negotiating table immediately and in good faith. I reiterate the United Nations' full support to the tireless efforts by the mediators to achieve this goal and we stand ready to support implementation of such a deal. If talks do not resume, I fear for the worst for the beleaguered and terrified civilians in Rafah, for the hostages held in unimaginable conditions for more than 225 days, and for an overstretched humanitarian operation that remains on the brink inside the Strip.

Mr. President,

My colleague from OCHA will brief in greater details on the dire humanitarian situation in and around Rafah momentarily but allow me to highlight some critical observations from the ground.

Since the first week of May, the security situation in Rafah has rapidly worsened as the IDF operations and military maneuvers in and around the city have intensified.

On 5 May, Hamas launched mortars and rockets at IDF soldiers massed on the Israeli side of Karem Abu Salem/Kerem Shalom crossing, killing four IDF soldiers and wounding ten. IDF tank shelling and a series of airstrikes in Rafah killed at least 19 Palestinians on the same day, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza. The following day, the IDF said that it would operate with "extreme force" against Hamas in eastern Rafah and ordered approximately 100,000 Palestinians to immediately evacuate to what it described as an "expanded humanitarian area in Al-Mawasi." Since operations began, more than 800,000 people have been displaced from Rafah to Mawasi, Khan Younis and Deir al Balah amid daily IDF airstrikes in Rafah, killing dozens of Palestinians. Hamas has continued to fire rockets indiscriminately from Gaza towards Israel.

These events have had a significant impact on humanitarian operations and access.

The so-called expanded humanitarian area in al-Mawasi lacks adequate shelter, food, water and sewage infrastructure and crossings for the entry of humanitarian goods have already been directly affected.



In the wake of the Hamas strike on 6 May, Israeli authorities closed Karem Abu Salem/Kerem Shalom crossing for three days. The following day, the IDF said it had established “operational control of the Gazan side of the [Rafah] crossing,” and closed the crossing for the movement of goods and people. The Rafah crossing with Egypt remains closed.

In addition, active hostilities and IDF operations continue to render nowhere safe in Gaza, including for humanitarian workers. Just last week a staff member of the UN Department of Safety and Security from India died and another staff member was seriously injured when their UN vehicle was struck as they travelled to the European Hospital in Rafah Governorate. This brings to a total 193 UN staff who have been killed in Gaza since the start of hostilities. Humanitarian movements must be made safer.

Mr. President,

I am deeply concerned that the current trajectory – including the possibility of a larger-scale operation – will further undermine efforts to scale-up the entry of humanitarian goods and their safe distribution to desperate civilians.

The opening of the Zikim or Erez West crossing in Gaza’s north, including for the entry of humanitarian relief items arriving via Ashdod and from Jordan, is a welcome development, as is the entry for the first time of humanitarian supplies through Cyprus via the US-built floating pier on 18 May.

However, I reiterate, that more aid is needed to meet the enormous scale of the needs in Gaza and there is no substitute for the full and increased operation of existing land crossings.

The UN continue to engage with all concerned parties, including the Israeli authorities, to address these and other safety concerns, including an improved humanitarian notification system.

Mr. President,

The Secretary-General, alongside numerous international partners and concerned neighbors, including Egypt, have voiced serious objection to a military operation in the city of Rafah amid clear indications of its devastating consequences for the civilian population.

Saving lives and addressing the critical needs in Rafah and Gaza more broadly must remain our immediate priority and I reiterate the Secretary-General’s call for a humanitarian ceasefire.

At the same time, we must not lose sight of the risks that these immediate threats pose to prospects for a resolution of this conflict and for longer term peace and stability in the region.

I am very concerned that the failure to reach a ceasefire in Gaza and a large-scale military operation in Rafah exacerbates the risk of escalating regional tensions. Since the start of hostilities on 7 October, I have engaged continuously in the region, including in Lebanon, to avert a wider spillover and I – in support of the Secretary-General – will continue these efforts.

I also reiterate that there can be no long-term solution in Gaza that is not fundamentally political.

The new Palestinian Government, with eight ministers from Gaza, represents an important opportunity to support tangible steps towards unifying Gaza and the occupied West Bank politically, economically, administratively.

The international community should provide support to the new Government to address its fiscal challenges, strengthen its governance capacity and prepare it to reassume its responsibilities in Gaza and, ultimately, govern the whole of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Palestinian Authority must also be an integral part of planning for Gaza’s recovery and reconstruction.

The devastation and misery of the past seven months have reinforced a simple truth. Palestinians and Israelis can no longer wait to establish a viable political horizon to end the conflict and establish a two-State solution. Day after day we are witnessing the deadly consequences of inaction. Now is the time to lay the foundations for a better future for Palestinians, Israelis and the broader region. The UN will continue to support all such efforts.

Thank you.

## **XXII. UN Special Rapporteur on Torture calls for probe of allegations of torture and mistreatment against Palestinian detainees by Israel**

*On 23 May, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Alice Jill Edwards issued the following [press release](#).*

The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Alice Jill Edwards, has urged the Government of Israel to investigate multiple allegations of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment against detained Palestinians since 7 October 2023.

“Persons deprived of liberty must always be treated humanely,” Edwards said. “They must be provided with all protections required under international human rights and humanitarian law, whatever the circumstances of their detention.”

Since the attacks of 7 October 2023, it is estimated that thousands of Palestinians including children have been detained. Palestinians from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and from Gaza are being held in prisons run by the Israeli Prison Service and in Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) camps.

The Special Rapporteur received allegations of individuals being beaten, kept in cells blindfolded and handcuffed for excessive periods, deprived of sleep, and threatened with physical and sexual violence. Other reports suggest prisoners have been insulted and exposed to acts of humiliation, such as being photographed and filmed in degrading poses, while prolonged use of zip-tie handcuffs has reportedly caused friction injuries and wounds.

“I am particularly concerned that this emerging pattern of violations, coupled with an absence of accountability and transparency, is creating a permissive environment for further abusive and humiliating treatment of Palestinians,” she said.

It appears that no effective measures have been taken by the Israeli authorities to investigate these allegations.

Since 7 October 2023, the growth in the prison population has exacerbated a pre-existing overcrowding problem leading to lowering of standards, the expert said.

“Official downgrading of conditions in certain places of detention is not acceptable. At all times, the minimum international standards must be adhered to,” she said.

“How we treat others during moments of crisis is a sign of how much we have internalised human rights,” she said. “No circumstances, however exceptional, can ever justify torture or ill-treatment.”

“The Israeli authorities must investigate all complaints and reports of torture or ill-treatment promptly, impartially, effectively and transparently. Those responsible at all levels, including commanders, must be held accountable, while victims have a right to reparation and compensation.”

The UN expert called on the Government of Israel to allow immediate access to international human rights and humanitarian observers to all the places in which Palestinians have been detained since the 7 October 2023 attacks.

“I am available to support the Government in reviewing detention conditions and standards of treatment, including by conducting an official visit to the country,” Edwards said.

The UN expert [previously](#) expressed her condemnation of the attacks of 7 October 2023 and called for accountability for those international crimes.

### **XXIII. The International Court of Justice orders Israel to stop Rafah offensive**

*On 24 May, The International Court of Justice issued the following [press release](#).*

The International Court of Justice today delivered its Order on the [request for the modification and the indication of provisional measures](#) submitted by South Africa on 10 May 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).

In its [Order](#), the Court:

“(1) By thirteen votes to two,

Reaffirms the provisional measures indicated in its Orders of [26 January 2024](#) and [28 March 2024](#), which should be immediately and effectively implemented;

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

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

(2) Indicates the following provisional measures:

The State of Israel shall, in conformity with its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and in view of the worsening conditions of life faced by civilians in the Rafah Governorate:

(a) By thirteen votes to two,

Immediately halt its military offensive, and any other action in the Rafah Governorate, which may inflict on the Palestinian group in Gaza conditions of life that could bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

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

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

(b) By thirteen votes to two,

Maintain open the Rafah crossing for unhindered provision at scale of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance;

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

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

(c) By thirteen votes to two,

Take effective measures to ensure the unimpeded access to the Gaza Strip of any commission of inquiry, fact-finding mission or other investigative body mandated by competent organs of the United Nations to investigate allegations of genocide;

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

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

(3) By thirteen votes to two,

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

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

*AGAINST: Vice-President Sebutinde; Judge ad hoc Barak.”*

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Vice-President SEBUTINDE appends a dissenting opinion to the Order of the Court; Judges NOLTE, AURESCU and TLADI append declarations to the Order of the Court; Judge ad hoc BARAK appends a dissenting opinion to the Order of the Court.

In its Order, the Court emphasizes that the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip which, as stated in its [Order of 26 January 2024](#), was at serious risk of deteriorating, has deteriorated, and has done so even further since the Court adopted its [Order of 28 March 2024](#). It notes that,

“[a]fter weeks of intensification of military bombardments of Rafah, where more than a million Palestinians had fled as a result of Israeli evacuation orders covering more than three quarters of Gaza’s entire territory, on 6 May 2024, nearly 100,000 Palestinians were ordered by Israel to evacuate the eastern portion of Rafah and relocate to the Al-Mawasi and Khan Younis areas ahead of a planned military offensive.

The military ground offensive in Rafah, which Israel started on 7 May 2024, is still ongoing and has led to new evacuation orders. As a result, according to United Nations reports, nearly 800,000 people have been displaced from Rafah as at 18 May 2024.”

The Court considers that these developments are exceptionally grave and constitute “a change in the situation within the meaning of Article 76 of the Rules of Court”. The Court is also of the view that the provisional measures indicated in its Order of 28 March 2024, as well as those reaffirmed therein, do not fully address the consequences arising from the change in the situation, thus justifying the modification of these measures.

The Court further considers that, on the basis of the information before it, the immense risks associated with a military offensive in Rafah have started to materialize and will intensify even further if the operation continues. In addition, the Court is

“not convinced that the evacuation efforts and related measures that Israel affirms to have undertaken to enhance the security of civilians in the Gaza Strip, and in particular those recently displaced from the Rafah Governorate, are sufficient to alleviate the immense risk to which the Palestinian population is exposed as a result of the military offensive in Rafah”.

A summary of the Order appears in the document entitled “[Summary 2024/6](#)”, to which summaries of the opinions and declarations are annexed. This summary and the full text of the Order are available on the [case page](#) on the Court’s website.

#### **XXIV. “We have said repeatedly that no place is safe in Gaza” says UN Humanitarian Affairs Chief**

*On 27 May, the following [statement](#) was issued by Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.*

We have said repeatedly that no place is safe in Gaza. Not shelters. Not hospitals. Not the so-called humanitarian zones.

We have also warned that a military operation in Rafah would lead to a slaughter.

We’ve seen the consequences in last night’s utterly unacceptable attack.

Whether the attack was a war crime or a “tragic mistake,” for the people of Gaza, there is no debate. What happened last night was the latest – and possibly most cruel – abomination.

To call it “a mistake” is a message that means nothing for those killed, those grieving, and those trying to save lives.

#### **XXV. UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk voices horror at loss of life in camp after Israeli strikes**

*On 27 May, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk issued the following [statement](#).*

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk on Monday voiced his horror at the further loss of civilian life in Gaza, after Israeli air strikes on Sunday hit a camp for displaced people in the southern city of Rafah.

“The images from the camp are horrific and point to no apparent change in the methods and means of warfare used by Israel that have already led to so many civilian deaths,” said Türk. “Sunday’s strike underscores once again that there is literally no safe place in Gaza.”

On 26 May, Palestinian armed groups fired a large barrage of rockets towards Tel Aviv in Israel, with several people reported to have been slightly injured. A few hours later, munitions from an Israeli aircraft struck a camp in the Al Hashash area in Rafah. Reports from the ground indicate several explosions and fires were ignited. The area was said to be sheltering people who had been displaced from North Gaza.

Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) said that the strike had targeted senior “ Hamas officials”, and that they were aware of reports that civilians had been harmed in the resulting fires.

“I note that the IDF has announced a review, but what is shockingly clear is that by striking such an area, densely packed with civilians, this was an entirely predictable outcome. It is crucial that such reviews lead to accountability and changes in policy and practices,” the High Commissioner said.

“I call on Israel to cease its military offensive in Rafah Governorate, as ordered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ).”

On 24 May, the ICJ ordered Israel to halt its offensive and any other action in the Rafah Governorate which could bring about “the physical destruction” of the Palestinian group in Gaza.

The High Commissioner once again called on all parties to the conflict to put in place a ceasefire, given the imperative of protecting civilians.

“Palestinian armed groups must stop the firing of rockets which are inherently indiscriminate, in clear violation of international humanitarian law. They must also unconditionally release all hostages at once,” Türk said.

“Israel must take immediate steps to protect civilians, and ensure they have access to essential humanitarian assistance, and release all those detained arbitrarily.”

## **XXVI. UN Special Coordinator Tor Wennesland Calls for Immediate Ceasefire Following Deadly Airstrikes in Rafah**

*On 27 May, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland issued the following [statement](#).*

“I condemn last night’s Israeli airstrikes which hit tents for displaced people in the southern Gaza city of Rafah and have tragically led to the reported loss of more than 35 Palestinian lives, including women and children, and dozens of injuries.

While the IDF said it struck a Hamas installation and killed two senior Hamas militants in the strikes, I am deeply troubled by the deaths of so many women and children in an area where people have sought shelter.

I call upon the Israeli authorities to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into this incident, hold those responsible for any wrongdoing to account, and take immediate steps to better protect civilians.

All parties in the conflict must refrain from actions that set us further away from achieving an end to hostilities and further jeopardize the already fragile situation on the ground and the broader region.

I reiterate the Secretary-General’s call for an immediate ceasefire and for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages to end the suffering of civilians.

The United Nations remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting all efforts aimed at ending the hostilities, reducing tensions, and advancing the cause of peace.”

## **XXVII. Palestinians with disabilities face unbearable consequences of the ongoing hostilities and violence in the OPT**

*On 27 May, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities issued the following [press release](#).*

The Committee calls upon all parties to cease attacks, violence, and hostilities against civilians. The Committee is extremely troubled that the last seven months of confrontation have led to massive destruction, death, loss and suffering for civilians in Gaza, including at least 58,000 people with disabilities, the majority of them children, older people and women. It is gravely distressed about the situation of persons with disabilities taken hostage, and the reports of killings of persons with disabilities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, by Israeli forces. The Committee echoes with dismay the concerns of several international mandate-holders about the latest evacuation orders from Eastern and Southern Rafah affecting close to [one million](#) Palestinians in addition to the at least [1.7 million people in Gaza already displaced](#) – hundreds of thousands displaced multiple times.

The Committee recalls to the State of Israel as the occupying Power of its obligations pursuant to [Article 11 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (the Convention) to take all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict. States parties to the Convention should apply Article 11, which includes international humanitarian law, and the law on occupation as defined in conventional and customary international law. The Committee calls on parties to the conflict to comply with the core principles of the laws of armed conflict during the conduct of hostilities, notably the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions, the fundamental guarantees of humane treatment and non-discrimination, and ensure unhindered access of humanitarian relief urgently needed for civilians in Gaza.

The Committee is appalled that survival and the physical and mental integrity of persons with disabilities remains at stake. They are at higher risks of dying, becoming injured and acquiring further impairments. Available data indicates that out of [79,562](#), at least 5,000 people injured were persons with disabilities and that more than 1,000 children have acquired impairment as their limbs have been removed. This figures, however, could be higher as challenges to obtain reliable data and information about persons with disabilities persists. Women and children with disabilities are among the [70 percent of civilians killed and 75 percent of those reportedly injured](#). They face heightened vulnerability to sexual abuse, sexually transmitted infections, and forced healthcare practices because of limited access to sexual and reproductive health services in Gaza. Older persons with disabilities, women with disabilities and children with disabilities have lost access to appropriate sanitation facilities, safe and accessible shelter and, crucially, food and water to survive.

Children with disabilities have been exposed to a heightened risk of family separation, and their suffering is unendurable. The Committee is shocked by the account of a 14-year-old girl with cerebral palsy and refugee in Eastern Rafah, whose parents carried her during the family escape from the North to the South of Gaza and who had lost her assistive devices, including a wheelchair, amid military attacks. Being exhausted and exposed to the dangerous flee, the girl desperately cried out, “Mama, it’s over. Leave me here, and you run away”. She continues to face fear over the warnings of military operations in Rafah and the danger of another displacement in the absence of her mobility devices. Her situation exposes the constant psychological distress and trauma being experienced by children with disabilities. Children with intellectual disabilities have been further subjected to severe disruption in the education system, given the suspension of the school year 2023-2024, the closing of Government schools and the destruction of at least 65 schools previously administered by UNRWA and the use of schools as temporary shelters. Prior to 7 October, about 21,000 children were recognized as children with intellectual disabilities in Gaza. The Committee is dismayed that in overcrowded refugee camps and tents, children like Amir, a boy displaced jointly with his mum and younger brother from Khan Younis and with intellectual disabilities, facing distress and has lost any option for education, habilitation and rehabilitation that are crucial for their early development, including her communicational skills.

Persons with disabilities have been put in extreme distress with the expectation that they will be the first and the next to be killed because of the limited opportunities to flee and take part in first or successive evacuations due to impairment. The vast destruction of housing and civil infrastructure, and the resultant rubble, has curtailed any possibility of movement that is essential to escape, evacuate and seek protection. The absence of advance warning and information in accessible formats about relocation and the destruction of communication networks has rendered evacuation impossible. Being a person with visual impairment meant for the deceased Mr. Y. M., an advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities, the impossibility to flee his house located in an area under attack and bombardments. He was killed at home on 7 December 2023, leaving behind four children aged 2, 3, 8 and 10. He did not receive evacuation information in a timely or accessible format, neither did he or his relatives benefit from any specific accessible passages, accommodation and shelters where he could have found the protection measures and escaped the airstrike. The Committee regrets that disability advocates are among those injured, displaced, separated, traumatized, and grieving their loved ones.

The Committee is shocked by the disproportionate impacts on persons with disabilities due to the destruction of hospitals, the cut-off of essential services, restrictions or non-existing access to humanitarian assistance. It is deeply concerned by the lack of access to medical care and medication required for treatment of chronic diseases by persons with disabilities, the lack of access to psychosocial support and their heightened risks of death during searches and attacks to hospitals, and the reported exposure to white phosphorus and toxicity causing serious risks of developing further impairments. The siege has caused a food crisis, which further compounds the



situation for persons with disabilities as they are confronted with physical barriers to get to distribution points or have no access to assistive devices or support. The food crisis presents risks of starvation, dehydration, worsening health conditions and imminent death for persons with disabilities.

States parties to the Convention, humanitarian stakeholders, and civil society actors should ensure disability-responsive peacebuilding, recovery and reconstruction of Gaza, in close consultation and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations. Reconstruction requires data collection, including baseline data, reflecting the barriers confronted by persons with disabilities. International cooperation and rescue packages should ensure budgetary lines exclusively for restoring community peer support networks and developing support systems for persons with disabilities in the community, including personal assistance and short, mid-and-long-term programmes to ensure accessible services in the community.

The Committee will continue monitoring the situation of persons with disabilities in the armed conflict in the current armed conflict and humanitarian emergency caused by the escalation of the war in Gaza, in conformity with the mechanisms defined in the Convention, in particular [Article 36 \(1\)](#) that provides for the Committee to request further information from State parties relevant to the implementation of the Convention.

### **XXVIII. The UN Palestinian Rights Committee Bureau welcomes the expanding wave of recognitions of the State of Palestine; condemns ongoing attacks in Gaza**

*On 28 May, the Bureau of UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People issued the following [press release](#).*

The Bureau warmly welcomes the recent recognition of the State of Palestine by Barbados, The Bahamas, Ireland, Jamaica, Norway, Spain, and Trinidad and Tobago. The Bureau commends the determination of these countries to uphold and advance the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to bring hope in the midst of a devastating war in Gaza and increased threats to the survival of the Palestinian people.

The expansion of recognitions follows the UN General Assembly [resolution](#) of 10 May 2024, reaffirming the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and their independent State of Palestine. Such developments echo growing international voices clamouring for equal rights and self-determination as enshrined in the UN Charter, and for an end to the 57-year Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and a just, peaceful diplomatic solution to the question of Palestine. The Bureau urges the Security Council to align itself with the broad consensus expressed by the General Assembly and recommend the admission of the State of Palestine as a full member of the United Nations.

The Bureau welcomes the International Court of Justice Provisional Measures Order of 24 May 2024, following on Provisional Measures indicated on 26 January 2024 and 28 March 2024, ordering Israel to immediately halt its military offensive in Rafah, allow for unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza, and for the access to Gaza of UN investigative mandates.

The Bureau deplores the ongoing Israeli military operations in Gaza and particularly in Rafah on 26 May, two days after the ICJ's ruling, and where at least 45 Palestinian civilians, including children, among them infants, were killed and more than 200 wounded in their displacement camp by an Israeli missile attack. It calls for an investigation and to hold accountable those responsible for such grave breaches of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law.

The Bureau appeals to the international community for urgent and coordinated efforts aimed at ending the Israeli occupation and achieving a just, lasting, and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, in accordance with international law, relevant United Nations resolutions, and the Arab Peace Initiative, to bring an end to this historic and grave injustice.

## **XXIX. UN Secretary-General Condemns ‘in Strongest Terms’ Deadly Air Strikes in Rafah, Gaza, on Tents Sheltering Displaced People, Stressing Horror Must Stop Immediately**

*The following [statement](#) was issued on 28 May by the Spokesperson for UN Secretary-General António Guterres.*

The Secretary-General has condemned in the strongest terms the 26 May air strikes on Rafah hitting tents sheltering displaced people. He is heartbroken by the images of the killed and injured, including many small children. As he has said before, the horror and suffering must stop immediately.

The Secretary-General grieves for the over 36,000 Palestinians and some 1,500 Israelis killed in the relentless violence, including the gruesome acts of terror perpetrated by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups in Israel on 7 October 2023, the devastating Israeli assault on Gaza, the continued indiscriminate rocket launches towards Israel. The humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza is now compounded by the unconscionable prospect of a man-made famine.

The Secretary-General reiterates his demand for an immediate ceasefire and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. He recalls the recent orders of the International Court of Justice, which are binding and must be complied with.

The Israeli authorities must allow, facilitate and enable the immediate, safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian supplies assistance to those in need and all crossing points must be open in line with Security Council resolution 2720 (2023). Humanitarian organizations must have full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to reach all civilians in need across Gaza, in line with Security Council resolution 2712 (2023).

We must work expeditiously to restore security, dignity and hope for the affected population. This will require urgent efforts to support and strengthen the new Palestinian Government and its institutions, including preparing the Palestinian Authority to reassume its responsibilities in Gaza. We must also move forward with tangible and irreversible steps to create a political horizon.

The devastation and misery of the past seven months have reinforced the absolute need for Israelis, Palestinians, the States of the region and the broader international community to take urgent steps that will enable the parties to re-engage on the long-delayed political path to achieve a two-State solution. The UN will continue to support all such efforts.

## **XXX. UN experts outraged by Israeli strikes on civilians sheltering in Rafah camps**

*On 29 May, 50 UN experts issued the following joint [press release](#).*

Israeli air strikes on a camp sheltering displaced civilians in Tal al-Sultan in Rafah, that have reportedly claimed at least 46 lives including 23 women, children and older persons on Sunday night are an outrage, UN experts\* said today, demanding decisive international action to end the bloodshed in Gaza.

“Harrowing images of destruction, displacement and death have emerged from Rafah, including infants torn apart and people burnt alive,” the experts said. “Reports emerging from the ground indicate that the strikes were indiscriminate and disproportionate, with people trapped inside burning plastic tents, leading to a horrific casualty toll.”

“These barbaric attacks are a flagrant violation of international law. They are also an attack on human decency and our collective humanity,” the experts said.

At least 46 Palestinians were reportedly killed in an Israeli air strike in Rafah's Tal al-Sultan on the night of Sunday 26 May 2024, with hundreds more treated for severe burns. On Tuesday, another attack in al-Mawasi in Western Rafah reportedly killed 21 Palestinians, of whom 13 were women.

“Recklessly targeting sites known to shelter displaced Palestinians, including women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons, seeking refuge constitutes a grave breach of the laws of war and a grim reminder of the urgent need for international action and accountability,” they said.

“Even if Israeli leaders claim now that the strikes were a ‘mistake’, they bear international legal responsibility. Calling it a mistake will not make the strikes legal, bring back those killed in Rafah or give comfort to grieving survivors,” the UN experts said.

They recalled that the attack comes soon after a landmark [ruling](#) by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which ordered Israel to immediately halt the military offensive, and any other action in Rafah that may result in genocidal acts. Israel had flagrantly disregarded this directive in Sunday night's attack, the experts said.

“ICJ orders like the one issued on 24 May 2024 to Israel are binding. And Israel – which has enjoyed impunity for its crimes against the Palestinian people for decades, and for its brutal assault on the people of Gaza over the past eight months – must comply,” the experts said.

They demanded an independent international investigation into the attacks on the Rafah displacement camps. “Those responsible for these atrocities must be held to account,” the experts said.

They called for immediate sanctions and other measures by the international community to pressure Israel to comply with international law.

“The flow of arms into Israel must stop immediately. It is abundantly clear that these weapons are being used to brutally kill and maim Palestinian civilians,” the UN experts said.

They demanded unimpeded humanitarian access to Gaza and an end to the blockade and restrictions on the delivery of life-saving aid to civilians in the besieged enclave.

“A staggering five per cent of Gaza's population has been killed or injured, more than 70 per cent of homes destroyed, and more than 75 per cent displaced. The agony of Gaza's people must end,” they said.

The experts expressed deep frustration at the international community's failure to come together and stop Israel's brutal assault, which has endangered Palestinians and Israeli hostages alike.

“This cannot be tolerated,” the experts said. “An immediate and permanent ceasefire, coupled with meaningful measures to document and [ensure accountability](#) for atrocities, and secure the fundamental rights of Palestinians in Gaza, are the only path forward to salvage our shared humanity.”

**\*The experts:** Paula Gaviria Betancur, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons; Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967; Ashwini K.P., Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Dorothy Estrada Tanck (Chair), Laura Nyirinkindi (Vice-Chair), Claudia Flores, Ivana Krstić, and Haina Lu, Working group on discrimination against women and girls; Carlos Salazar Couto (Chair-Rapporteur), Michelle Small, Ravindran Daniel, Jovana Jezdimirovic Ranito, SORCHA MacLeod, Working Group on the use of mercenaries; Tomoya Obokata, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences; Gina Romero, Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; Mary Lawlor, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Siobhán Mullally, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; Mama Fatima Singhateh, Special Rapporteur on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children; Surya Deva, Special Rapporteur on the right to development; Cecilia M Bailliet, Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity; Pedro Arrojo Agudo, Special

Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation; Alexandra Xanthaki, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; George Katrougalos, Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order; Heba Hagrass, Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities; Margaret Satterthwaite, Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers; Farida Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on the right to education; Morris Tidball-Binz, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Claudia Mahler, Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons; Barbara G. Reynolds (Chair), Bina D'Costa, Catherine Namakula, Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent; Aua Baldé (Chair-Rapporteur), Gabriella Citroni, Grażyna Baranowska, Ana-Lorena Delgadillo Pérez and Angkhana Neelapaijit, Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; Nicolas Levrat, Special Rapporteur on Minority issues; Ben Saul, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism; Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing; Tlaleng Mofokeng, Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Olivier De Schutter, Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights; Reem Alsalem, Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences; Robert McCorquodale (Chair-Rapporteur), Fernanda Hopenhaym (Vice-Chair), Pichamon Yeophantong, Damilola Olawuyi, Elzbieta Karska, Working Group on business and human rights; Astrid Puentes, Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

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