



# General Assembly Security Council

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

Security Council  
Seventy-ninth year

## **Identical letters dated 8 May 2024 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council**

I write once again as a matter of utmost urgency as Israel escalates its violent aggression, including acts of terror, on the vulnerable Palestinian civilian population under its illegal occupation, including attacks on Rafah, where the majority of Gaza's civilians have fled in an attempt to escape the genocidal onslaught launched against them by Israel since October 2023, and the threat of an even more vicious invasion by the occupying army.

The unbridled carnage perpetrated by the Israeli occupying forces over the past 7 months, under the direct command of Israel's political and military leadership, has killed at least 34,735 Palestinians in Gaza and injured 78,108. Children, women and men have been killed in their homes, in the streets, on their journeys fleeing from north to south, in United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) shelters and in hospitals, schools, mosques and churches.

Those who have managed to survive these 215 days of horrors continue being attacked wherever they go, forced to flee from one place to another in desperate search of safety while weakened by hunger and disease, fear for their lives and the traumas of the terror, suffering and loss inflicted by the occupying forces. Displaced over and over, their dwellings and communities reduced to rubble, they have left behind them a trail of tears, tragedies and grief too many to count, forced to leave many of their loved ones unburied in the ruins of their homes or placed in mass graves with hundreds of souls murdered as Israel persists with its decimation of the population and annihilation of whatever infrastructure remains sheltering civilians and sustaining life.

This harrowing scenario is now unfolding in Rafah, where 1.5 million Palestinians have been sheltering, the majority in makeshift tents after fleeing from northern Gaza after Israel demanded they leave their homes, falsely promising them safety in the south. Israeli occupying forces have now ordered over 100,000 civilians in eastern Rafah to "evacuate" the area and go to Al-Mawasi and Khan Younis, which lie in ruin and are strewn with thousands of tons of unexploded ordnance posing a



danger to all civilians. These orders have triggered fears of a wider ground invasion, prompting terrified families to leave shelters and hospitals in the area, and have been accompanied by air strikes and Israel's seizure of the Palestinian side of Rafah crossing, paralysing humanitarian access from the south and further exacerbating the deprivation and famine conditions borne by already traumatized civilians.

We call upon the international community to act now to stop Israel's planned assault on Rafah, which United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Chief Martin Griffiths has stressed would be "nothing short of a tragedy beyond words", bringing even more devastation for "the hundreds of thousands of people who have fled to Gaza's southernmost point to escape disease, famine, mass graves and direct fighting", and which United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) officials warn would be a "catastrophe upon a catastrophe".

The Security Council in particular has a duty to demand a halt to this criminal Israeli aggression, which represents a grave threat to international peace and security, and to protect the Palestinian civilian population, in line with international law and the Council's own resolutions, including resolutions [2712 \(2023\)](#), [2720 \(2023\)](#) and [2728 \(2024\)](#). The unbearable toll on civilians, especially women, children, older persons and the sick, wounded and disabled, compels immediate action to uphold international legal obligations, including under humanitarian and human rights law and including in accordance with the binding provisional measures orders indicated by the International Court of Justice on 26 January 2024 and 28 March 2024.

In this regard, we must draw urgent attention in particular to the plight of women and children and other vulnerable civilians, who are bearing untold suffering and misery. On 6 May, United Nations Special Rapporteurs warned that, by its systematic violence against women and children, Israel is "seemingly sparing no means to destroy their lives and deny them their fundamental human rights". It is unconscionable that over 15,000 Palestinian children and 10,000 women have already been killed by Israel in the past 7 months and that an estimated 37 children lose their mother every single day.

How can such barbarity be permitted by the world? What future will there be for the estimated 17,000 to 20,000 orphans already created in Gaza by this Israeli genocide against our people?

There can be no justification for such inhumanity, reflected in thousands upon thousands of heart-wrenching stories, including the tragic story of an infant, Sabreen al-Rouh, who was saved from the womb of her mother, who was killed by an Israeli strike that also killed the infant's father and 3-year-old sister, but then died days later in a hospital incubator despite the heroic efforts of doctors to save her life. She and her family tragically joined the thousands of other families erased by Israel's genocidal onslaught on the Palestinian people in its frenzied attempts to depopulate the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, of its indigenous Palestinian population in order to facilitate its nefarious plans to annex all the Palestinian land and establish "Greater Israel".

This insane, criminal aggression on the Palestinian people must be stopped. The Security Council must demand an immediate ceasefire and impose consequences if that demand continues to be ignored. If not stopped, an Israeli assault on Rafah would only wreak more human devastation and misery on the children, women and civilians sheltering there. There must be protection for the civilian population, as obligated by international humanitarian law and demanded by Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [2712 \(2023\)](#), [2720 \(2023\)](#) and [2728 \(2024\)](#).

The Council cannot allow such blatant contempt for its authority and cannot leave the more than 2 million Palestinians across Gaza who are desperate for survival

without any protection. It cannot leave unprotected the approximately 600,000 children in Rafah, among them 78,000 infants under 2 years of age, nearly all of whom are “either injured, sick, malnourished, traumatized or living with disabilities” and in dire need of mental health and psychosocial support, according to UNICEF. As stressed by UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell, “Rafah is now a city of children, who have nowhere safe to go in Gaza. If large scale military operations start, not only will children be at risk from the violence, but also from chaos and panic, and at a time where their physical and mental states are already weakened.”

The international community cannot sit idly by allowing these innocents to continue to be exposed to the dangers and risks of more loss of life, more trauma and more loss of limbs, joining the over 1,000 children estimated by UNICEF to have lost either one or both legs since this war on our people began and the over 5,000 who suffer other disabilities from their injuries and whose path to recovery remains nearly impossible in the absence of any relief from the pain, rehabilitation treatments, and necessary devices such as wheelchairs or prostheses.

This includes a 14-year-old boy in Khan Younis who was seriously injured and had to suffer limb amputations following the detonation of a booby-trapped can of food he found as he searched for his belongings in the rubble of his home. Many others have also been injured in similar incidents. What kind of depraved army lays such traps for hungry and desperate people? We reiterate that Israel and its occupying forces must be listed among the serial violators of child rights.

We implore the Security Council to shoulder forthwith its Charter of the United Nations obligations, and we appeal for an end to the obstruction of the necessary action by the Council in the face of this horrifying situation. In addition to protection, the Council must ensure safe, rapid and unimpeded access for humanitarian aid and humanitarian workers, including UNRWA, throughout the entirety of Gaza. The urgency of ensuring that life-saving aid, including food, reaches the civilian population has been underscored by World Food Programme Executive Director Cindy McCain, who days ago raised the alarm that “there is famine – full-blown famine – in the north, and it’s moving its way south”.

The Council must also call for immediate, independent, international investigations of the crimes perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, in Gaza, including in regard to the mass graves discovered at Al-Shifa and Nasser hospitals. This is imperative, as stressed by Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in order to “establish the precise circumstances under which hundreds of Palestinians lost their lives and were buried, or reburied”.

The time for accountability is long past due. The Security Council must act, the General Assembly must act, the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court must act, all peace-loving States that respect and adhere to international law must act with urgency and conscience to bring an end to this illegal and grave situation and to ensure that justice is realized for all the victims.

The practice of shielding Israel by the veto in the Security Council, which has only emboldened its erroneous belief that it is a State above the law, must end if we are ever to bring an end to this horrendous crisis, now in its eighth month, and an end to the illegal colonial occupation and apartheid regime that have caused so much human suffering and so much insecurity, trauma and loss for millions of people, and if we are ever to realize a just, lasting and peaceful solution.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 833 letters on the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 25 April 2024 (A/ES-10/990-S/2024/341) constitute a

basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations against our people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

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

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

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