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I. CEIRPP and OIC organize the 2024 Symposium on the Question of Jerusalem

On 1 July, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP), in cooperation with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), organized in Jeddah the 2024 Symposium on the Question of Jerusalem “Jerusalem and the Gaza War: Palestinian Identity and Existence Under Threat of Erasure.” Below is the Chair [summary](#) of the event.

The 2024 Symposium on the Question of Jerusalem “*Jerusalem and the Gaza War: Palestinian Identity and Existence Under Threat of Erasure*” was convened at the headquarters of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, under the joint auspices of the OIC and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP). Ahead of the event, the Committee Delegation held a bilateral meeting with H.E. Mr. Houssein Ibrahim Taha, Secretary General of the OIC. The Delegation also conducted, following the Symposium, a visit to Riyadh to meet with representatives of the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Symposium on Jerusalem aimed to highlight Israel’s policies of forced displacement and dispossession of the Palestinian people in the city, in the context of similar efforts elsewhere in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), and particularly in light of Israel’s ongoing war in Gaza and the onslaught of massive, forced displacement of the Palestinian civilian population. The event also showed the Committee’s support for OIC’s call for international action to stop Israel’s aggression and to reach a peaceful settlement of the conflict based on international law and relevant UN resolutions leading to an independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

At the Opening Session, the Secretary-General of the OIC, H.E. Mr. Houssein Ibrahim Taha, stressed that the event was being held at a time when all felt the seriousness of the situation in the occupied city of Jerusalem, as a result of the repeated Israeli attacks on its Islamic and Christian sites and its Arab identity, through settlement policies, land confiscation, home demolitions, the construction of the separation wall, attacks on Muslim and Christian worshippers, and other serious violations. He reiterated that Al-Quds al-Sharif was an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and that all Israeli policies and measures in the city were illegal and illegitimate, constituting an attack on the political, historical and legal rights of the Palestinian people and embodying a flagrant violation of international law and relevant UN resolutions. These policies threatened to expand the cycle of conflict to a dangerous religious one, affecting the security and stability in the entire region. He called for responsible international action to put an end to this situation.

Mr. Taha reiterated OIC’s principled position condemning the Israeli military aggression on the Gaza Strip of now more than eight months, which had led to the death of nearly 40,000 civilians and the injury of 80,000, the majority being women and children. The military attacks were condemned for the destruction of hundreds of thousands of buildings, properties and civilian infrastructure, the forced displacement of more than one million Palestinians from their homes and the impediment on humanitarian aid to all Gaza. He expressed his disappointment at the failure of the UN Security Council to oblige Israel, the Occupying power, to implement its resolutions calling for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire and the complete withdrawal of the Israeli occupation forces from Gaza and to ensure safe, sustainable and unhindered humanitarian access. In this context, the international community needed to shoulder its legal, political and moral responsibilities towards putting an end to the crime of genocide that was occurring in Gaza and to use all available international judicial mechanisms in order to deter Israel from committing further crimes and put an end to its impunity for the past and ongoing violations.

In his opening remarks, the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the OIC, H.E. Mr. Saleh bin Hamad Al-Suhaibani, called on the international community to intervene to stop the unjustified Israeli aggression against unarmed civilians in the OPT and urged the immediate implementation of all UN Security Council resolutions and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) provisional measures in response to the situation. He stressed the significance of the Holy City of Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque in the conscience and heart of the Islamic community, insisting that their status and historical Islamic identity must be respected.

Mr. Al-Suhaibani highlighted that his country was committed to supporting the Palestinian people on all levels to help them achieve their aspirations and the independence of the State of Palestine. He highlighted the Kingdom's intensive support for the Palestinian cause at the UN and other international forums, as well as its leadership of the Islamic-Arab Ad Hoc Ministerial Committee dedicated to formulating an international response to the Gaza war and launching a genuine political process for a permanent and comprehensive peace, in accordance with the resolutions adopted during the joint Islamic and Arab Summit held in Riyadh on 11 November 2023. He also referred to Saudi Arabia's active participation in the public ICJ sessions on the case about the legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the OPT. Mr. Al-Suhaibani also stressed the humanitarian support efforts through the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, providing assistance to the affected Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, to alleviate their suffering as a result of the Israeli war, and mentioned that over the past few years Saudi Arabia had provided \$ 5.258 billion in support to Palestine.

He reiterated his country's firm position in support of the Palestinian cause and finding a just solution to the issue that would secure the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to return to their homeland, full sovereignty over their natural resources, the right to establish their independent state in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, the Arab Peace Initiative submitted by Saudi Arabia, and the establishment of a Palestinian state on the basis of the 1967 borders. The Palestinian cause and the rights of its people to their land would not expire over time or with Israel's attempts to impose a *fait accompli*. The Symposium confirmed the concrete efforts to defend those rights and increase international awareness on the question of Palestine.

For his part, the Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Khaled Khiari, reiterated the call of Secretary-General Guterres to all parties for a humanitarian, permanent and immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages, respect for humanitarian principles and international law, and to ensure that UN workers were protected. There was no better and more secure answer to preserving Palestinian identity than the vision of two States – Israel and a fully independent, contiguous, viable and sovereign Palestinian State, of which Gaza was an integral part – living side by side in peace and security within secure and recognized borders, on the basis of the pre-1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States.

As international efforts continued towards reaching a deal that would release the hostages and put in place an immediate ceasefire, he called to establish a political framework that would also move towards a long-term political resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the vision of two States living side by side in peace.

The Chair of the Committee and Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations in New York, Ambassador Cheikh Niang, reminded that amid the ongoing Israeli aggression in Gaza, at least 1.7 million Palestinians had been displaced – more than three quarters of the area's whole population – and more than one million people did not have drinking water or food, nor access to medical assistance. He referred to the recently published UN Secretary-General report on Children and Armed Conflict, which found that this conflict alone has led to a 155 per cent increase in grave violations against Palestinian children.

He highlighted that in East Jerusalem, amidst the ongoing war, the demographic and historical character of the city continued to be altered by illegal Israeli policies and measures, including the violation of Palestinians' freedoms of movement and worship, the destruction of old buildings owned by Palestinians and the construction of railroads and cable cars, as well as archaeological excavations affecting the Christian and Muslim quarters.

Mr. Niang welcomed the recent recognition of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, by a number of countries in the Caribbean – Barbados, the Bahamas, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago – and Europe – Armenia, Ireland, Norway, Slovenia and Spain. Similar steps were consistent with international law and relevant UN resolutions and would strengthen international efforts aimed at ending the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory. He called on Member States to accept Palestine's membership in the UN as an independent and fully sovereign state in common with the others, and to uphold all inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Finally, he reiterated the Committee's firm commitment and advocacy efforts with Member States and in collaboration with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation to achieve a just and lasting peaceful settlement, based on the two-State solution, and leading to an independent and sovereign Palestinian State on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

In his remarks, the representative of the State of Palestine, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations in New York Ambassador Riyad Mansour, underscored that since the beginning of the Israeli aggression in Gaza, the State of Palestine had been able to unite the Arab and Islamic position at the UN in New York, around three important goals – the immediate cessation of the aggression in the Gaza Strip and throughout the OPT, the unhindered entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip, and the cessation of war crimes and the forced displacement of the Palestinians in Gaza. Additionally, he highlighted the adoption of a set of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions supporting these objectives.

He pointed at the advocacy in the Caribbean region and Western Europe which have led to the recognition of the State of Palestine by many Member States in these regions, including all CARICOM. In this regard, the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine praised the role played by the Islamic Arab Ministerial Committee, led by Saudi Arabia, which had toured capitals, including those of the five permanent members of the Security Council, to stop the Israeli aggression and promote the recognition of the State of Palestine.

During the plenary session, the Minister of Jerusalem Affairs of the State of Palestine, H.E. Mr. Ashraf Al-Awar, expressed his appreciation to the UN Committee and the OIC for their constant and crucial support for the Palestinian cause and their continuous efforts to preserve the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The Symposium came at a critical time when Israel was intensifying its aggression against the Palestinian people, reflected by the growing indiscriminatory ideology of political parties in Israel and their actions on the ground. In addition to the war on Gaza, there was the Judaization process to alter the judicial and historical status of the Holy Sites in Jerusalem, including the ongoing excavations under Al-Aqsa Mosque and the imposition of restrictions on Palestinian worshippers during the Friday prayers. Displacement, dispossession, land confiscation and evacuation orders in Sheikh Jarrah and other neighbourhoods in Jerusalem continued to allow illegal Israeli settlements to expand and separate Jerusalem from its Palestinian hinterland, making Palestinian residents a minority in their own city. In the occupied West Bank, Israeli settlements were being built with the intention to isolate Jerusalem from Hebron, Bethlehem and Ramallah, and the E1 project aimed to separate the southern West Bank from its northern parts.

Mr. Al-Awar called for an international response to bring accountability and justice to Israeli actions and concrete measures to end the Israeli occupation. The Security Council must implement its resolutions, avoid double standards and abide by the legal and moral obligations to afford protection to the Palestinian people in the Occupied Territory, including East Jerusalem.

Ms. Maha Samman, Associate Professor at Al-Quds University, gave a presentation on Israel's colonialist planning in Jerusalem, touching on the geopolitical context of the city, the Israeli alterations of its boundaries since 1948 and the ensuing demographic war that had been taking place with the purpose to decrease the existence of a group that preceded the creation of an Israeli state – the Palestinians. She explained how colonialist urban planning has been one of the important tools employed to achieve a full control over Palestinian residents and their marginalization, leading to a disconnection of the people from their land and heritage. For example, after the 1967 War, the boundaries of the city were expanded in a crooked way so as to include as much as possible vacant land for the construction of Israeli settlements and exclude Palestinian populated areas – culminating in the construction of the Separation Wall in 2002.

The Old City of Jerusalem had subsequently suffered from degraded housing units following difficulties in obtaining rehabilitation permits for the Palestinian residents and a commercial dry-up with the shutdown of shops due to the inability of owners to pay imposed high fees and taxes. The difficulty to obtain construction permits led to "illegal" units that were then demolished by the Israeli authorities, with 22,000 demolition orders to date and an average of 100 demolitions per year in the city, leading to a state of dispossession and loss among the Palestinian residents and to some case to self-demolition of property. In areas where the Bedouin communities resided, the latter also faced displacement, demolitions and sewage dumping from Israeli settlements in an attempt to force them to leave. The use of colonialist urban planning therefore resulted in deteriorated Arab neighbourhoods, affecting the everyday life of Palestinians.

Ms. Samman explained that Gaza, following the Israeli 2005 Disengagement Plan, had become the biggest open prison with unmet basic education, medical, food, power assistance needs. Restricted access within 300 meters of the perimeter side with Israel and off the Gaza coast had affected the access to livelihoods including agriculture and fishing – all showing how the Israeli control of space and people has changed from one form to

another, but never ceased. Over the years, these restrictions had been compounded by military aggression, culminating in the current war.

Mr. Munir Nuseibah, Director of Al-Quds Human Rights Clinic and Community Action Centre, spoke of an unprecedented level of suffering faced by the Palestinian people today in Gaza with mass destruction and displacement, famine and degrading treatment inflicted upon them. In East Jerusalem, there was also an increasing oppression through the revocation of residencies, dispossession of lands and their confiscations for Israeli “public interest” through the use of Israel’s legal system, including the Absentee Property Law.

He welcomed the intensified efforts at the United Nations to hold Israel accountable for its crimes and address the complicity of some Member States in Israel’s continuing impunity. He lauded recent initiatives towards individual sanctions, including by Malaysia and Turkey. He called for a similar move by regional organisations such as the OIC and the League of Arab States. Member States should also join legal efforts initiated by South Africa against Israel at the ICJ and support other initiatives to enforce Third State responsibility, as done by Nicaragua against Germany, also in the ICJ. Other laudable initiatives in the framework of a prolonged campaign to hold the Israeli state officials accountable included the investigations of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which had requested arrest warrants against Israeli officials. He also recommended that the UN Committee consider means for the reactivation of the previous UN Committee Against Apartheid to work against apartheid in Israel.

During the discussion, the Kingdom of Morocco reaffirmed its support for the Palestinian cause as key to the stability and peace in the Middle East and its commitment to achieve a permanent solution, as well as its humanitarian assistance to Gaza. The Morocco representative called for a ceasefire and the protection of civilians to stop the bloodshed and to create conditions conducive to a peaceful solution. Indonesia thanked the Committee for holding the Symposium. It highlighted the need for OIC Members to uphold the status of Jerusalem in times of war on Gaza and to address the root causes of occupation, mediate for a ceasefire in Gaza and work towards accountability for the crimes committed, to continue to push for the freedom of the Palestinian people and their independence based on the two-State solution.

In the closing session, Ambassador Riyad Mansour (Palestine) called the event an important step in reviving collective action. The presence of the full Bureau delegation at the event showed the determination of the Committee to continue its collaboration with the OIC to achieve justice for the Palestinian people. He underscored that the summation of these collective efforts would soon lead not only to stopping the genocidal war on Gaza, but also to the accomplishment of common goals – the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including those to self-determination, return and statehood.

II. UN human rights experts condemn decades of unfair trials for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank

On 6 May, Margaret Satterthwaite, Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, and Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, issued the following [press release](#).

Palestinians’ right to due process guarantees have been violated for 57 years UN experts said today, denouncing the lack of fair trial in the occupied West Bank since June 1967.

On 7 June 1967, the Israeli military commander issued three proclamations concerning the military’s executive, security, public order, and judicial authority in the occupied West Bank. These provisions were later amended into Military Order No. 378, which established military courts.

“In the occupied West Bank, the functions of police, investigator, prosecutor, and judge are vested in the same hierarchical institution – the Israeli military,” the experts said.

The Order establishes vague procedural instructions and broad powers to military forces for the conduct of proceedings.

“This military system has served to control many aspects of Palestinians’ daily lives, including public health, education, and land and property law. It also criminalises many forms of political and cultural expression, association, movement, nonviolent protest, traffic offenses, and other acts that might be considered methods for opposing the occupation and its policies,” the experts said.

“This translates into a situation where military judges in military courts consistently provide legal and judicial cover for acts of torture, cruel and degrading treatment against Palestinian detainees carried out by their colleagues in the armed forces and intelligence agencies. It also makes legal defence impossible,” they said.

Under international standards, guarantees of fair and public trial include the independence and impartiality of the courts and require that the judicial system is not dependent on the discretion of any branch of government, particularly the executive and armed forces.

“The dual court system set up in the occupied West Bank, in violation of international law, has furthered legitimisation of the occupation and illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, through a militarily enforced, draconian penal system that is only applied to Palestinians without due process guarantees,” the experts said. “We are especially disturbed that Palestinian children are subject to this abusive system.”

“This system also turns a blind eye to settler violence and criminality, allowing it to grow and remain in impunity,” they said.

“Since the beginning of the occupation, the Israeli military has either taken part in or failed to protect Palestinians from violent settler attacks in the occupied West Bank, including, extrajudicial killings, forced displacement, property damage, destruction and unlawful appropriation, discrimination, harassment, and threats.”

Public scrutiny of these proceedings, and access to information about the harsh treatment of Palestinians in military courts and leniency towards illegal settlers is extremely limited given the media censorship exercised by the Israeli military, the experts said.

Israeli military courts allow the military prosecutor to request a prohibition order against Palestinian detainees, preventing them from meeting with their lawyers for a total period of 60 days. This practice denies detainees the right to confer with legal counsel, especially during the interrogation process, the experts said.

When part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against a civilian population, severe deprivation of physical liberty can amount to a crime against humanity.

The experts were concerned that an order posted by the Israeli military on its website on 29 May transferred responsibility for dozens of bylaws at the Civil Administration – the Israeli body governing in the West Bank – from the military to pro-settler officials led by Finance Minister Bezalet Smotrich. The experts recall that annexation is absolutely prohibited under international law.

“We call on Israel as the de facto occupying power, to repeal Military Order No. 378 and related laws and regulations, dissolve the military court, and ensure the right to fair trial in the occupied West Bank,” the experts said.

The experts have been in contact with Israel about these concerns.

III. ILO predicts unemployment in West Bank will surge to 45% due to Gaza war

On 3 July, the International Labor Organization issued a new [study](#) on the impact of the war in Gaza on private sector workers and businesses in the West Bank. The key findings of the report are excerpted below.

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The findings of the study reveal that the deep-seated structural problems endemic in the West Bank's labour market have been further entrenched and exacerbated by current hostilities.

Aggregate labour market indicators have deteriorated amidst the private sector's struggles. This is evident in rising unemployment rates, declining wage levels and growing informality. Projections indicate that, under the scenario that the war persists until the end of June 2024, the unemployment rate will surge to 45.5 per cent in 2024, a significant increase from 30.7 per cent in 2023. A primary catalyst for this uptick in unemployment is the sudden displacement of over 160,000 Palestinian workers from the Israeli labor market as of 7 October 2023. The abrupt influx of nearly 20.0 per cent of the West Bank's employed populace, who have lost their jobs in Israel, into an already saturated domestic labor market has had devastating repercussions on the local economy.

Private sector workers bear the brunt of the crisis, as revealed by the findings of the workers' survey. Since 7 October 2023, 33.5 per cent of the workers surveyed have lost their jobs. At the same time, part-time work arrangements have become increasingly prevalent, with the proportion of part-time workers rising from 10.6 per cent before the war to 40.7 per cent after the war began. Disaggregating the findings by gender reveals that men have borne a greater proportion of job losses and transitions to part-time work than women.

Beyond employment losses and job transitions, the workers' survey sheds light on the impact of the war on workers' hours and wages. Over half of the surveyed workers who have remained employed after 7 October have experienced a reduction in their hours of work compared to pre-war levels. This decrease in hours has translated into reduced wages for 39.6 per cent of the workers surveyed. However, not all wage reductions are due to reduced hours of work. More than one-fifth of workers who are still employed are receiving reduced wages despite continuing to work full hours.

Among workers who have lost their jobs, just 31.4 per cent report that they have received their end-of-service entitlements. Another 36.0 per cent have been assured by employers that they will receive these entitlements once the situation improves. The remainder are either still negotiating their entitlements, or are engaged in labour disputes over them.

Due to job losses, reductions in hours of work, and other factors associated with the war, a significant 87.2 per cent of the workers surveyed have experienced a decline in their household income since October 2023. Only 11.1 per cent have been able to maintain their pre-war income levels, and a mere 1.7 per cent of households have experienced an increase in their incomes.

To mitigate the adverse effects of the war, Palestinian households have employed various coping strategies. Primarily, they have reduced their expenditures on entertainment, followed by cutbacks in spending on food, healthcare and education. A significant majority of households have relied on their personal savings (71.1 per cent), deferred loan payments (48.5 per cent) and sold financial assets (26.6 per cent) to navigate the economic downturn. A minority of households have opted for more substantial changes as coping mechanisms.

Some members have pursued training to enter new professions (16.8 per cent), while others have engaged in subsistence farming (9.7 per cent).

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IV. OHCHR on a new wave of settler attacks displacing Palestinian herding communities in the occupied West Bank

On 6 July, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Occupied Palestinian Territory issued the following [statement](#).

The situation in the occupied West Bank is a matter of grave concern as Israel allows and facilitates an environment characterized by fear forcing communities from their homes and lands. Settlers, acting with the protection and support of Israeli security forces, are escalating violent attacks on herding communities in the South Hebron Hills, Jordan Valley, and East Jerusalem that have been encircled by settlements and outposts. In incidents monitored by Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, settlers have attacked women and children in or near their homes, set fire to and vandalized property, stolen livestock, and destroyed infrastructure to prevent the community's access to water. Alongside demolitions carried out by the Israeli Civil Administration, such attacks are forcing Palestinians to leave their lands. This, in turn, aids consolidation and expansion of Israeli settlements and outposts in the areas.

On midnight of July 4, more than 200 Israeli settlers, reportedly from Avigayil outpost, attacked the herding community of Khamlet Al-Daba, Masafer Yatta for about 4 hours, setting fire to fields, burning one home and damaging four others, assaulting Palestinians with sticks and stones, destroying 30 solar panels, a water pump and an electric generator, damaging four vehicles, and stealing over 80 of their livestock, the community's main source of income. According to eyewitnesses, Israeli Forces (IF) did nothing to stop the settlers. Also, in the South Hebron Hills, settlers, reportedly from the Shorashim outpost, have attacked daily in the past week the Palestinian herding community of Umm Al-Khair to force them to leave. Similarly, on July 1, settlers attacked with stones, sticks, and pepper spray and injured seven Palestinians, including four women, a 5-year-old girl, and a 17-year-old boy, again in the presence of ISF. Also, on July 3, settlers broke down the water pump that supplies the community with water. This set of incidents followed a large-scale demolition carried out on June 26 by the Israeli Civil Administration, which demolished three residential structures, two animal pens, and a community centre, forcibly displacing 27, including 15 children, according to OCHA.

East of Jerusalem, the herding community of Khilet Al Sidra, Mikhmas, has since October 7 come under increased pressure from settlers by surrounding outposts and settlements who have obstructed their access to grazing land, cut water supplies and physically and verbally attacked the community and threatened to harm them if they don't leave. On June 26, a mob of Israeli settlers protected and supported by ISF, allegedly stole around 20 sheep from a one of the herders by claiming that they were theirs and had mingled with the ones belonging to Palestinians. After the incident, the Palestinian community moved their livestock to Mikhmas village and other areas, imposing further hardship on them and risks making their livelihood unsustainable.

In the Jordan Valley, on June 22-June 23, Israeli settlers and IF raided the herding community of Ras Ein 'Al-Auja alleging that the community had stolen livestock from settlers. Reflecting a new trend of attacks, settlers and ISF, went through the animal pens and seized 13 sheep alleging that they were theirs, which the community denies. ISF arrested six Palestinian community members including a woman and a child who showed up first in the location during the raid, shot in the air towards Palestinians and fired tear gas.

According to monitoring by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, such attacks fit within long-standing trends of organized violence against Palestinians committed with impunity and with the backing of IF but reflect an increase in intensity and overt state support since October 7. This fresh wave of settler attacks also comes as Israel's government takes overt measures that could facilitate the annexation of Palestinian land in violation of international law, including through declarations of massive swathes of land as "State land" for the development of settlements, the retroactive "legalization" of outposts and establishment of new settlements, including over 5000 housing units on July 5, demolitions of Palestinian homes, as well as the transfer of administrative powers over the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, from the Israeli military authority to Israeli government offices.

V. OHCHR appalled by IDF's new evacuation orders in Gaza City

On 9 July, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Occupied Palestinian Territory issued the following [statement](#).

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is appalled as IDF once more orders residents of Gaza City, many of whom have been forcibly displaced multiple times, to evacuate to areas where IDF military operations are ongoing and where civilians continue to be killed and injured.

On 7 July, IDF issued an order to civilians in areas of central parts of Gaza City, including At Tuffah and Ad Daraj, to immediately evacuate to the west of Gaza City. While issuing this evacuation order, the IDF intensified its strikes in the south and west of Gaza City, targeting the very areas where they had instructed people to move to. In the morning of 8 July, IDF issued a statement confirming that they had hit an UNRWA HQ located west of Gaza City, again in the area where people had been told to relocate. Later, on 8 July, IDF issued another order calling people in parts of Gaza City, including those in its western part, to further evacuate to Deir al Balah -which is already seriously overcrowded with Palestinians displaced from other areas of the Gaza Strip and where there is little infrastructure and limited access to humanitarian assistance.

Palestinians have nowhere left to shelter.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has repeatedly raised concerns that IDF's evacuation orders are confusing, often instructing people to relocate to areas where IDF military operations are ongoing. We reiterate our call on Israel to take all efforts to ensure the safety of civilians in Gaza.

Against this backdrop, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is also deeply worried about the fast-deteriorating civil order throughout the Gaza Strip, which is having a significant negative impact on the protection of Palestinians in Gaza and on the humanitarian space.

The Office calls for an immediate ceasefire.

VI. UN human rights experts declare famine has spread throughout the Gaza Strip

On 9 July, Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food; 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, Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967; 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; George Katrougalos, Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order; Barbara G. Reynolds (Chair), Bina D'Costa, Dominique Day and Catherine Namakula, Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, issued the following [press release](#).

The recent deaths of more Palestinian children due to hunger and malnutrition leaves no doubt that famine has spread across the entire Gaza strip, a group of independent experts said today.

“Fayez Ataya, who was barely six months old, died on 30 May 2024 and 13-year-old Abdulqader Al-Serhi died on 1 June 2024 at the Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al-Balah. Nine-year-old Ahmad Abu Reida died on 3 June 2024 in the tent sheltering his displaced family in Al-Mawasi, Khan Younis. All three children died from malnutrition and lack of access to adequate healthcare,” the experts said.

“With the death of these children from starvation despite medical treatment in central Gaza, there is no doubt that famine has spread from northern Gaza into central and southern Gaza.”

The experts said the death of a child from malnutrition and dehydration indicates that health and social structures have been attacked and are critically weakened. “When the first child dies from malnutrition and dehydration, it becomes irrefutable that famine has taken hold,” the experts said.

“We declare that Israel’s intentional and targeted starvation campaign against the Palestinian people is a form of genocidal violence and has resulted in famine across all of Gaza. We call upon the international community to prioritise the delivery of humanitarian aid by land by any means necessary, end Israel’s siege, and establish a ceasefire.”

“When a 2-month-old baby and 10-year-old Yazan Al Kafarneh died of hunger on 24 February and 4 March respectively, this confirmed that famine had struck northern Gaza. The whole world should have intervened earlier to stop Israel’s genocidal starvation campaign and prevented these deaths,” the experts said. “Thirty-four Palestinians have died from malnutrition since 7 October, the majority being children. Inaction is complicity.”

VII. WHO Regional Director sounds alarm following a visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territory

On 11 July, WHO Regional Director Dr. Hanan Balkhy issued the following [statement](#) on her visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

I have just returned from the occupied Palestinian territory, where I visited the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Jenin, and Gaza.

The situation in Gaza is concerning on both a human and humanitarian level. I saw firsthand the scale of devastation: lives and homes in ruins, hospitals overwhelmed, and a fully destroyed city. Lack of fuel is compromising all health and humanitarian operations. Running sewage and garbage litter demolished streets, with the smell of fermented waste permeating the air. This situation is providing the perfect breeding ground for diseases to spread, leading to an increase in cases of acute watery diarrhea and acute respiratory infections.

Ongoing violence and the breakdown of law and order are devastating an already crippled city and creating an extremely high-risk environment, not just for aid workers but everyone in Gaza. The breakdown of law and order also makes it nearly impossible to manage gender-based violence, exposing displaced Palestinians to additional life-threatening risks.

I met with WHO staff in Gaza, many of whom are national staff who have faced personal loss and suffering. Despite these challenges, they continue to risk their lives to deliver fuel and medical supplies to hospitals, and transfer patients to safety and care, striving to overcome delays and obstructions along the way.

As a result of increasing hostilities and soaring needs, WHO has expanded its medical supply chain for Gaza. However, much of this aid remains stuck on the wrong side of the borders, with only a fraction reaching Gaza. And even when supplies do enter Gaza, the breakdown of law and order again makes it challenging for our teams to deliver them to hospitals that urgently need them.

I visited the IMC field hospital in Deir Balah, which has relocated twice and tripled its capacity over the past few months. There, I met severely malnourished 7-year-old Jana, who was evacuated from Kamal Adwan in the north three months ago, and is still waiting for evacuation outside Gaza. Jana is one of more than 10,000 patients in need of specialized care outside the Strip, yet who remain unable to exit since 7 May. Their conditions range from trauma injuries to chronic diseases, to others.

In my meetings with Muhannad Hadi, UN Deputy Special Coordinator and Resident Humanitarian Coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territory, and Tor Wennesland, the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, we agreed on the need for immediate action to address suffering in Gaza.

We need Member States to swiftly fulfill their global diplomacy mandate and expedite an immediate truce. We need all borders, including the Rafah border, to open and allow fuel, medical supplies, and other essential humanitarian aid to flow in.

And we need those who require medical care to be able to exit. Before October 7, despite the need for permits, Gazans were able to seek medical care in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. This access to care must be restored. And those who need medical care in other countries must also be allowed to exit without further delay.

Gazans need more than just food, water, and medicine—they need protection, peace, security, and dignity. One man told me, “We long for a ceasefire, for a chance to live without fear.” A woman told me that she has one question for the world to answer. “Do you consider us human?” she asked me three times.

During my 11-day visit, I travelled to the West Bank, where I saw a rapidly worsening health situation. At Jenin General Hospital and the UNRWA clinic, I learned about health workers killed or injured due to repeated attacks and saw extensive damage to infrastructure and medical equipment.

With damaged roads and restricted access, WHO and partners, including the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, have set up mobile medical services to reach people at the point of injury.

At Jenin General Hospital and six other West Bank hospitals, WHO has supported mass casualty management training and response planning. Our goal is seamless and effective trauma care across all levels, based on lessons from Gaza. As we support the right to health for all Palestinians, we must also work to strengthen already fragile health systems in neighboring countries, including Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.

We are extremely concerned about the escalation of violence along the border between Lebanon and Israel, resulting in increased deaths and injuries among civilians and health workers, displacement, and damages to health infrastructure.

In our Region, entire generations have grown up knowing nothing but conflict and deprivation. Addressing the root, political causes of these emergencies is not just a humanitarian necessity but a strategic investment in Regional stability and security.

VIII. “Nowhere is safe. Everywhere is a potential killing zone” in Gaza, says the UN Secretary-General as he appeals for support to UNRWA

Below are the [remarks](#) of Secretary-General António Guterres, at the opening of the UNRWA Pledging Conference in New York on 12 July.

Every year we meet to help bridge the gap between what is pledged to UNRWA and what is needed. This year is different. Yes, we face a profound funding gap. But Palestinians are also seeing widening gaps across the board. Gaps in respect for international humanitarian law. Gaps in recognition of universal human rights and dignity for all. And, for Palestinians in Gaza, not just a gap — but a total breakdown in law and order.

Just when we thought it couldn’t get any worse in Gaza — somehow, appallingly, civilians are being pushed into ever deeper circles of hell. Recent days have brought yet more evacuation orders by Israeli authorities, yet more civilian suffering, and yet more bloodshed.

Palestinians in Gaza keep being forced to move like human pinballs across a landscape of destruction and death. The extreme level of fighting and devastation is incomprehensible and inexcusable – and the level of chaos is affecting every Palestinian in Gaza and all those desperately trying to get aid to them.

Nowhere is safe. Everywhere is a potential killing zone. It is high time for the parties to show the political courage and political will to finally reach a deal.

Nothing justifies the horrific attacks by Hamas on 7 October. And nothing justifies the collective punishment of the Palestinian people. Yet Palestinians – including, of course, Palestine Refugees – are enduring the deadliest period since the agency’s creation.

As we are all painfully aware, the horror has not spared UNRWA colleagues. 194 UNRWA staff members have been killed, the highest staff death toll in UN history. Many of them along with their families and loved ones. UNRWA is also being targeted in other ways. Staff have been the subject of increasingly violent protests and virulent misinformation and disinformation campaigns. Some have been detained by Israeli security forces, and subsequently reported mistreatment and even torture.

In the occupied West Bank, the presence and movements of UNRWA personnel have been severely restricted by Israeli authorities. Yet, despite these and other obstacles, in impossible conditions, and in the midst of their own grief, the women and men of UNRWA have bravely continued their work in whatever way they can. They are the backbone of humanitarian operations in Gaza.

Can you imagine what it must be like to be in this situation? Can you imagine how our colleagues wake up day after day in a living nightmare and still deliver for Palestinians in desperate need? Because I cannot.

They are doctors, nurses, counsellors, engineers, drivers and so many others, all demonstrating incredible courage and solidarity. And they are continuing to deliver UNRWA’s mandate in desperate circumstances in Gaza – while UNRWA also strives to deliver in an increasingly challenging situation in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria – championing human development and human rights.

Hopelessness is the greatest ally of instability. And the work of UNRWA is one of the greatest factors providing hope and stability across a troubled region. Without the necessary support and financing to UNRWA, Palestine Refugees will lose a critical lifeline and the last ray of hope for a better future.

To those of you who have already pledged support, I thank you.

My appeal to everyone is this: Protect UNRWA, protect UNRWA staff, and protect UNRWA’s mandate — including through funding.

Let me be clear: there is no alternative to UNRWA. We are working on all fronts to implement the recommendations of the Catherine Colonna Report, by strengthening UNRWA’s work and risk management mechanisms. Now is also the time to work on all fronts to support UNRWA’s critical mission.

And now is the time to bring an end to this terrible war, starting with an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza and an immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. Ultimately, only a political solution can bring an end to this conflict – one that realizes a vision of two States – Israel and Palestine – living side by side in peace and security, with Jerusalem as the capital of both states.

I urge you to act – and act now. Act to instill hope in a place where it is in short supply. Act to uphold the mandate of this General Assembly to sustain UNRWA. Act in solidarity with Palestine Refugees and all the Palestinian people.

IX. 118 Member States sign Statement of Shared Commitments on UNRWA

On 12 July, the following [press release](#) was issued by UNRWA.

The initiative of shared commitments on UNRWA was proposed by Jordan, Kuwait, and Slovenia on 22 May 2024 on behalf of 16 Member States, and formally launched in the margins of the UNRWA Pledging Conference in New York on 12 July. As of that day, 118 Member States, including all members of the UN

Security Council, have signed up to these commitments, which are an expression of solidarity and support to UNRWA.

The initiative comes at a critical time as UNRWA undergoes unprecedented attacks and systematic attempts to dismantle it. It is a tribute to our staff working across the region, including on the humanitarian front lines in the Gaza Strip.

UNRWA remains committed to continue delivering assistance and basic services including education to Palestinian boys and girls.

Statement of Shared Commitments on UNRWA

We acknowledge and appreciate the work of the United Nations system under the leadership of Secretary-General in the region of the Middle East. In this regard, we particularly emphasize the vital role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), in accordance with its General Assembly mandate, in providing life-saving assistance to generations of Palestinian refugees through the provision of essential education, health, relief and social services programmes and emergency assistance in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. In this regard we commit to continue:

- Recognizing the important and indispensable role of the Agency in its 75 years of existence and work in assisting the Palestinian refugees and contributing to regional stability, and expressing support for UNRWA to effectively uphold its mandate in all fields of operation;
- Underlining that UNRWA is the backbone of all humanitarian response in Gaza, and recognizing that no organization can replace or substitute UNRWA's capacity;
- Expressing appreciation to the United Nations Secretary General and UNRWA Commissioner-General for their dedication to the UNRWA mandate and mission, consistent with the relevant UN resolutions, and with humanitarian principles, including the principle of neutrality, as demonstrated also by the immediate establishment of the external independent review of UNRWA, the Secretary-General's endorsement of the review's recommendations, and the Commissioner-General's commitment to implement the review's recommendations,
- Underscoring the need for the United Nations Secretary General, UNRWA, and Member States to expeditiously implement the recommendations of the independent review group report;
- Welcoming the immediate initiation of the OIOS investigation into serious allegations made against a number of UNRWA employees, calling for a full and thorough investigation of the allegations, and reiterating the need for full accountability;
- Underscoring appreciation and admiration for the work of the staff of the Agency in all fields of operation in fulfillment of the Agency's mandate and respect for the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence;
- Emphasizing the role of UNRWA as a pillar of regional stability and a lifeline of hope and opportunity for the millions of Palestinian refugees it serves, including children and women, and in this regard recognizing serious humanitarian, political and security risks that would result from any interruption or suspension of its vital work;
- Highlighting concerns about the extremely critical financial situation of the Agency,
- Recognizing the efforts of donors and host countries to respond to the Agency's financial crisis, and the importance of sufficient, predictable and sustained funding support to the Agency;
- Underlining the importance of cooperation of all States and other UN bodies with UNRWA;
- Drawing attention to deliberations at the United Nations in order to further advance the visibility of and support to UNRWA's important work.

X. This terrible war must end, Secretary-General tells the Security Council

The following are Secretary-General António Guterres' [remarks](#) to the Security Council, delivered by Courtenay Rattray, Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General, on 17 July.

Last December, the hostilities in Gaza and Israel that have created appalling human suffering, physical destruction, and collective trauma — led to my exceptional invocation of Article 99 of the United Nations Charter. Seven months later, the war rages on.

Over 38,000 Palestinians have been reported killed according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza — with some 87,000 injured and thousands missing — many of whom are women and children. Over 1,500 Israelis and foreign nationals have been reported killed according to Israeli sources — with more than 7,000 injured and 125 hostages still held in Gaza. The humanitarian support system in Gaza is close to total collapse.

There is a complete breakdown of public order. And the spectre of further regional spillover is increasing by the day, as exchanges of fire across the Blue Line between Hizbullah and Israel continue. Nothing can justify the horrific acts of terror committed by Hamas and other armed groups in Israel on 7 October. And nothing can justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people.

In recent weeks, Israeli military operations and fighting intensified across Gaza. Rockets continue to be launched by Palestinian armed groups from Gaza towards Israeli population centres. Rafah is in ruins – and the Rafah crossing remains closed, further hampering humanitarian operations. Almost two million people have been displaced— nearly the entire population of Gaza – and many of them multiple times.

Nowhere in Gaza is safe.

Meanwhile, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification partnership reports that almost half a million people face catastrophic levels of food insecurity. Communicable diseases are on the rise. Chokeholds on the fuel-supply have severely reduced access to water, sanitation, hygiene and health services.

The United Nations remains committed to delivering lifesaving aid in Gaza. But we face severe challenges and deadly risks. Humanitarian convoys are frequently unable to collect and distribute lifesaving goods in safety – including from the crucial Karem Abu Salem/Kerem Shalom crossing.

Attacks on humanitarian aid workers and shelters, as well as strikes on or near health and humanitarian facilities, continue. Lawlessness and criminality are rampant. The parties must fundamentally and urgently change their conduct to address these challenges.

The humanitarian notification system and other coordination mechanisms are not effective, resulting in delayed and aborted aid missions and the exposure of humanitarians to mortal risk. The UN still does not have the necessary security equipment in Gaza to manage the extreme risks that our personnel face.

Despite ongoing dialogue with Israeli authorities and some improvements, much more is needed. The entry of humanitarian aid at scale, and its delivery to all parts of Gaza, are essential to the survival and wellbeing of civilians. We need consistent access through all crossing points and better access to those in need, wherever they are. It is long past time for a safe enabling environment for effective humanitarian operations in Gaza, in line with international humanitarian law.

As much of the world's attention is focused on Gaza, the occupied West Bank — including East Jerusalem — faces perilous conditions. High levels of violence persist – including by Israeli security forces, settlers, and Palestinian armed groups.

Between 7 October 2023 and 17 July 2024, 557 Palestinians – including 138 children – were killed in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem; the vast majority were killed in the context of Israeli security operations, including during subsequent exchanges with Palestinian armed groups; these include 540 killed by

Israeli forces, 10 by Israeli settlers, and seven where it remains unknown whether the perpetrators were Israeli forces or settlers.

During the same period, 22 Israelis, including nine members of Israeli forces, were killed by Palestinians in Israel and the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Meanwhile, Israeli measures are undermining the Palestinian Authority, crippling the Palestinian economy and driving instability.

This month, the Israeli security cabinet approved a series of punitive steps against the Palestinian Authority. The steps reportedly include the legalization, under Israeli law, of five Israeli outposts in the occupied West Bank, the advancement of thousands of settlement housing units, and demolitions in parts of Area B in the occupied West Bank.

At the same time, the Israeli Finance Minister lifted the suspension of the transfer to the Palestinian Authority of partial clearance revenues. These revenues are collected by Israel on behalf of the Palestinians. He also renewed, for four months, the letter of indemnity for Israeli correspondent banking with Palestinian banks. Both of these measures are critical for Palestinian fiscal stability. But, once again, much more is required.

Recent developments are driving a stake through the heart of any prospect for a two-State solution. The geography of the occupied West Bank is steadily being altered through Israeli administrative and legal steps.

The seizure of large land parcels in strategic areas and changes to planning, land management and governance are expected to significantly accelerate settlement expansion. These changes include the issuance of two military orders at the end of May. These orders transferred powers to, and appointed, a civilian deputy in Israel's Civil Administration, which is alarming.

This move is another significant advance in the ongoing transfer of authority over many aspects of daily life in the occupied West Bank, and a further step towards extending Israeli sovereignty over this occupied territory. If left unaddressed, these measures risk causing irreparable damage.

We must change course. All settlement activity must cease immediately. Israeli settlements are a flagrant violation of international law and a key obstacle to peace. The violence must end, and the perpetrators of the violence must be swiftly brought to justice. Israel must ensure the safety and security of the Palestinian population.

The United Nations is sparing no effort to deliver humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in Gaza and to secure the release of all hostages held by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups. Those being held hostage have been suffering along with their families for far too long.

We need an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

With the tireless efforts of Egypt, Qatar and the United States, negotiations to formulate a deal for the release of the hostages and a ceasefire continue with some reported progress. The parties must reach such a deal now. The humanitarian situation in Gaza is a moral stain on us all. International humanitarian law must be respected – at all times and by all parties.

We must intensify efforts to increase humanitarian aid delivery. International support to these efforts is critical, particularly for the essential work of UNRWA.

Amid continued reports of serious abuses against Palestinians in Israeli custody, I reiterate that all detainees must be treated humanely and those held without lawful cause must be released. And this terrible war must end. We must refocus on finding a political solution that will end the occupation and resolve the conflict in line with international law, and relevant United Nations resolutions.

Ensuring that governance is restored in Gaza under a single, legitimate Palestinian government is essential to that effort. Support to the Palestinian Authority is critical. Its institutions must be strengthened so that it is prepared to govern and lead recovery and reconstruction efforts in Gaza.

All those with influence must take the urgent steps needed to enable the parties to re-engage on the long-delayed political path towards ending the occupation and resolving the conflict. This must occur in line with international law, relevant UN resolutions and bilateral agreements in pursuit of the vision of two States – Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, viable and sovereign Palestinian State – living side by side in peace and security within secure and recognized borders, on the basis of the pre-1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital of both.

The United Nations will continue to support all such efforts.

XI. Our collective inaction is shameful, CEIRPP Chair tells the Security Council

On 19 July, Chair of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Ambassador Cheikh Niang delivered the following [statement](#) at the Security Council quarterly open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Russia for assuming the July presidency of the Security Council and to His Excellency, Minister Lavrov, for presiding over this meeting.

I also thank Mr. Courtenay Rattray, Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General for his briefing. The Committee is grateful for the tireless efforts of the Secretary General toward achieving a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

In April, we urgently called on the Security Council to heed the General Assembly and the growing public demand for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Israel's relentless and disproportionate military actions in densely populated Gaza have caused more than 38,000 dead and 85,000 injured, while displacing over 1.9 million Palestinians.

The Security Council must demand an immediate halt to Israeli military actions, reject the normalization of such atrocities, the wanton killing of non-combatants, women, children and men, the elderly. The Security Council must also demand an immediate halt of all violations being committed against a civilian population under Israel's occupation.

We welcome the long overdue listing of those committing grave violations against children in this year's report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict. This step will contribute to accountability and help deter the heinous crimes being perpetrated against children in this prolonged conflict.

Our collective inaction is shameful and exacerbates Gaza's humanitarian catastrophe. We must make our slogans a reality: support the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and fulfill our commitment to "leave no one behind".

Women in Gaza, the who are the majority of the victims, are bearing increased caregiving and domestic burdens in tents and makeshift shelters. This situation worsens daily as families are forced to move from one Israeli designated so-called "safe zone" to another, none of which are actually safe as they are also targets of Israeli bombings. The majority of the 2.3 million Gazans are forced to live amid rubble and garbage. Scores of dead bodies lying around, and a demolished sanitation system are heightening the risk of disease. Hunger is a painful reality afflicting the entire population while Israel continues to hamper delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The Committee reiterates its strong support for the work of UN agencies in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Gaza. We unequivocally decry Israel's steps to undermine UNRWA and prevent the Agency to implement its GA-mandated activities. As the Secretary-General stated at the recent UNRWA Pledging Conference, there is no alternative to UNRWA. We must protect its staff and mandate.

Violence in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continues at alarming levels, driven by Israel's army and settler violence as well as settlement activity. Palestinian communities continue to suffer an ongoing Nakba, forcibly driven from their land and becoming dispossessed. According to the Israeli press, hundreds of Palestinians in East Jerusalem are facing eviction. Israel provocations, ongoing challenges to the historic and legal status quo at the Holy Sites, and growing Judaization of the City put pressure on its Palestinian and Arab inhabitants, risking further tensions and violence. We reiterate that any action taken by Israel to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Holy City of Jerusalem are illegal.

We condemn the expansion of illegal settlements and outposts, fueled by State policy and Israeli extremists. All settlement activity must stop.

The Committee acknowledges efforts by Egypt, Qatar and the United States to broker a cease-fire and the release of hostages. The Committee highlights the grave situation of Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons, often held without any charge and reportedly subject to torture, and reiterates calls for the release of all those unlawfully detained.

As has been stated in this Chamber many times, this conflict has wider ramifications. We must strive for peace in Occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem, and must demand adherence by all to the UN Charter's principles to prevent proliferation of conflicts that threaten regional stability and global peace and security.

United Nations resolutions and international law are clear: as the occupying Power, Israel has the obligation to protect Palestinian civilians. The Committee calls for humanitarian access adequate to the needs of the civilian population, and without delay.

The Committee recently concluded delegation visits to CARICOM, ASEAN, and the OIC to advocate for Palestinian rights. We warmly welcome the recent recognition of Palestine by Barbados, The Bahamas, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, as well as by Armenia, Ireland, Norway, Slovenia and Spain. The Committee encourages every country that has not done so to recognize Palestine, affirming the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence. Recognition is an investment in peace that brings hope to the Palestinian people.

The Committee calls on all Member States to adhere to all provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), including those addressing the risk of genocide in Gaza initiated by South Africa and other Member States who deserve our praise. Disregarding ICJ orders undermines the international legal system and jeopardizes peace and security, which this Council must preserve.

Earlier today, the ICJ issued its landmark advisory opinion on the legal consequences of Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), including East Jerusalem. The Court declared Israel's continued presence in the OPT since 1967 unlawful and called on Israeli to bring it to an end as rapidly as possible. It urges Israel to cease all settlement activities, evacuate all settlers, and provide reparations to all natural or legal persons concerned in the OPT.

The Court also advised that all States are under an obligation to not recognize as legal the situation arising from this unlawful presence of Israel in the OPT and not to render aid assistance in maintaining the current situation. We urge the General Assembly and the Security Council to act on the Court's call to end the unlawful presence of the State of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory swiftly".

Our Committee and all Member States must stand ready to support these efforts.

Let me conclude by reaffirming that the only viable possibility for a peaceful future is a two-State solution, based on UN resolutions and international law, with Israel and Palestine living side-by-side in peace and security, and with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine.

XII. The International Court of Justice declares Israeli presence in OPT illegal

On 19 July, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) delivered its [Advisory Opinion](#) on the legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and issued the following [press release](#).

The International Court of Justice has today given its Advisory Opinion in respect of the *Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*.

It is recalled that, on 30 December 2022, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted resolution A/RES/77/247 in which, referring to Article 65 of the Statute of the Court, it requested the International Court of Justice to give an advisory opinion on the following questions:

“(a) What are the legal consequences arising from the ongoing violation by Israel of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, from its prolonged occupation, settlement and annexation of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and from its adoption of related discriminatory legislation and measures?

(b) How do the policies and practices of Israel referred to . . . above affect the legal status of the occupation, and what are the legal consequences that arise for all States and the United Nations from this status?”

In its [Advisory Opinion](#), the Court responds to the questions posed by the General Assembly by concluding that:

- the State of Israel’s continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is unlawful;
- the State of Israel is under an obligation to bring to an end its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible;
- the State of Israel is under an obligation to cease immediately all new settlement activities, and to evacuate all settlers from the Occupied Palestinian Territory;
- the State of Israel has the obligation to make reparation for the damage caused to all the natural or legal persons concerned in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;
- all States are under an obligation not to recognize as legal the situation arising from the unlawful presence of the State of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by the continued presence of the State of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;
- international organizations, including the United Nations, are under an obligation not to recognize as legal the situation arising from the unlawful presence of the State of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; and
- the United Nations, and especially the General Assembly, which requested the opinion, and the Security Council, should consider the precise modalities and further action required to bring to an end as rapidly as possible the unlawful presence of the State of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Reasoning of the Court

After concluding that it has jurisdiction to render the requested opinion and that there are no compelling reasons for it to decline to give an opinion (paras. 22-50), the Court recalls the general context of the case (paras. 51-71) and addresses the scope and meaning of the two questions posed by the General Assembly (paras. 72-83).

The Court then assesses the conformity of Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as identified in question (a), with its obligations under international law. In particular, the Court's analysis examines, in turn, the questions of the prolonged occupation, Israel's policy of settlement, the question of the annexation of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, and Israel's adoption of related legislation and measures that are allegedly discriminatory (paras. 103-243).

With regard to the question of the prolonged occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which has lasted for more than 57 years (paras. 104-110), the Court observes that, by virtue of its status as an occupying Power, a State assumes a set of powers and duties with respect to the territory over which it exercises effective control. The nature and scope of these powers and duties are always premised on the same assumption: that occupation is a temporary situation to respond to military necessity, and it cannot transfer title of sovereignty to the occupying Power.

In the Court's view, the fact that an occupation is prolonged does not in itself change its legal status under international humanitarian law. Although premised on the temporary character of the occupation, the law of occupation does not set temporal limits that would, as such, alter the legal status of the occupation. Occupation consists of the exercise by a State of effective control in foreign territory. In order to be permissible, therefore, such exercise of effective control must at all times be consistent with the rules concerning the prohibition of the threat or use of force, including the prohibition of territorial acquisition resulting from the threat or use of force, as well as with the right to self-determination. Therefore, the fact that an occupation is prolonged may have a bearing on the justification under international law of the occupying Power's continued presence in the occupied territory.

As regards Israel's settlement policy (paras. 111-156), the Court reaffirms what it stated in its Advisory Opinion on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory of 9 July 2004, that the Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and the régime associated with them, have been established and are being maintained in violation of international law. The Court notes with grave concern reports that Israel's settlement policy has been expanding since the Court's 2004 Advisory Opinion.

As regards the question of the annexation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (paras. 157-179), it is the view of the Court that to seek to acquire sovereignty over an occupied territory, as shown by the policies and practices adopted by Israel in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, is contrary to the prohibition of the use of force in international relations and its corollary principle of the non-acquisition of territory by force.

The Court then examines the question of the legal consequences arising from Israel's adoption of related discriminatory legislation and measures (paras. 180-229). It concludes that a broad array of legislation adopted and measures taken by Israel in its capacity as an occupying Power treat Palestinians differently on grounds specified by international law. The Court notes that this differentiation of treatment cannot be justified with reference to reasonable and objective criteria nor to a legitimate public aim. Accordingly, the Court is of the view that the régime of comprehensive restrictions imposed by Israel on Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory constitutes systemic discrimination based on, *inter alia*, race, religion or ethnic origin, in violation of Articles 2, paragraph 1, and 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 2, paragraph 2, of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and Article 2 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

The Court then turns to the aspect of question (a) that enquires as to the effects of Israel's policies and practices on the exercise of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination (paras. 230-243). In this regard, the Court is of the view that, as a consequence of Israel's policies and practices, which span decades, the Palestinian people has been deprived of its right to self-determination over a long period, and further prolongation of these policies and practices undermines the exercise of this right in the future. For these reasons, the Court considers that Israel's unlawful policies and practices are in breach of Israel's obligation to respect the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

Turning to the first part of question (b), the Court examines whether and, if so, how the policies and practices of Israel have affected the legal status of the occupation in light of the relevant rules and principles of international law (paras. 244-264).

In this respect, the Court first considers that the first part of question (b) is not whether the policies and practices of Israel affect the legal status of the occupation as such. Rather, the Court is of the view that the scope of the first part of the second question concerns the manner in which Israel's policies and practices affect the legal status of the occupation, and thereby the legality of the continued presence of Israel, as an occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This legality is to be determined under the rules and principles of general international law, including those of the Charter of the United Nations.

In this context, the Court is of the view that Israel's assertion of sovereignty and its annexation of certain parts of the territory constitute a violation of the prohibition of the acquisition of territory by force. This violation has a direct impact on the legality of Israel's continued presence, as an occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Court considers that Israel is not entitled to sovereignty over or to exercise sovereign powers in any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory on account of its occupation. Nor can Israel's security concerns override the principle of the prohibition of the acquisition of territory by force.

The Court further observes that the effects of Israel's policies and practices, and its exercise of sovereignty over certain parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, constitute an obstruction to the exercise by the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination. The effects of these policies and practices include Israel's annexation of parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the fragmentation of this territory, undermining its integrity, the deprivation of the Palestinian people of the enjoyment of the natural resources of the territory and its impairment of the Palestinian people's right to pursue its economic, social and cultural development.

The Court is of the view that the above-described effects of Israel's policies and practices, resulting, *inter alia*, in the prolonged deprivation of the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination, constitute a breach of this fundamental right. This breach has a direct impact on the legality of Israel's presence, as an occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Court is of the view that occupation cannot be used in such a manner as to leave indefinitely the occupied population in a state of suspension and uncertainty, denying them their right to self-determination while integrating parts of their territory into the occupying Power's own territory.

In light of the foregoing, the Court turns to the examination of the legality of the continued presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (paras. 259-264).

The Court considers that the violations by Israel of the prohibition of the acquisition of territory by force and of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination have a direct impact on the legality of the continued presence of Israel, as an occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The sustained abuse by Israel of its position as an occupying Power, through annexation and an assertion of permanent control over the Occupied Palestinian Territory and continued frustration of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, violates fundamental principles of international law and renders Israel's presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory unlawful.

This illegality relates to the entirety of the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel in 1967. This is the territorial unit across which Israel has imposed policies and practices to fragment and frustrate the ability of the Palestinian people to exercise its right to self-determination, and over large swathes of which it has extended Israeli sovereignty in violation of international law. The entirety of the Occupied Palestinian Territory is also the territory in relation to which the Palestinian people should be able to exercise its right to self-determination, the integrity of which must be respected.

The Court has found that Israel's policies and practices referred to in question (a) are in breach of international law. The maintenance of these policies and practices is an unlawful act of a continuing character entailing Israel's international responsibility.

The Court has also found in reply to the first part of question (b) that the continued presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is illegal. The Court therefore addresses the legal consequences arising from Israel's policies and practices referred to in question (a) for Israel, together with those arising from the illegality

of Israel's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory under question (b), for Israel, for other States and for the United Nations (paras. 267-281).

President SALAM appends a declaration to the Advisory Opinion of the Court; Vice- President SEBUTINDE appends a dissenting opinion to the Advisory Opinion of the Court; Judge TOMKA appends a declaration to the Advisory Opinion of the Court; Judges TOMKA, ABRAHAM and AURESCU append a joint opinion to the Advisory Opinion of the Court; Judge YUSUF appends a separate opinion to the Advisory Opinion of the Court; Judge XUE appends a declaration to the Advisory Opinion of the Court; Judges IWASAWA and NOLTE append separate opinions to the Advisory Opinion of the Court; Judges NOLTE and CLEVELAND append a joint declaration to the Advisory Opinion of the Court; Judges CHARLESWORTH and BRANT append declarations to the Advisory Opinion of the Court; Judges GÓMEZ ROBLEDO and CLEVELAND append separate opinions to the Advisory Opinion of the Court; Judge TLADI appends a declaration to the Advisory Opinion of the Court.

XIII. UN Commission of Inquiry welcomes ICJ Advisory Opinion

On 22 July, the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, issued the following [press release](#).

The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel welcomes the historic [Advisory Opinion](#) issued Friday by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) stating that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory is now illegal under international law.

“The Court was clear and unambiguous, and the advisory opinion entails international legal obligations not only for Israel, but for the UN and all States,” said Navi Pillay, the Chair of the Commission. “The maintenance and promotion of the international rules-based order will depend on compliance with this advisory opinion.”

In September 2022, in its report to the General Assembly ([A/77/328](#)), the Commission concluded that the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory was unlawful under international law owing to its permanence and to actions undertaken by Israel to annex parts of the land de facto and de jure. The Commission stated that the permanent occupation and annexation by Israel could not remain unaddressed.

The Commission recommended that the General Assembly request an advisory opinion from the ICJ on the legal consequences of the prolonged occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and on the obligations of third States and UN.

The Commission [welcomed](#) the General Assembly's referral to the ICJ a few weeks later for an advisory opinion, and issued a detailed [position paper](#) on the subject in September 2023.

In its advisory opinion on Friday, the ICJ – the highest court in the UN system – authoritatively set forth the law of occupation and the duties and obligations of an occupying power. The Court reiterated the prohibition of the acquisition of territory by the use of force, and the inalienable right of a people to self-determination. It then applied that law to the situation of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory since 1967.

Israel's policies and practices of establishing settlements and annexing territory, resulting in the forcible transfer of Palestinians from their lands, confiscation of Palestinian land and property, exploitation of natural resources and discriminatory legal regimes in occupied territory are all in violation of international law, including humanitarian law and human rights law.

The Court stated that “the United Nations, and especially the General Assembly, which requested this opinion, and the Security Council, should consider the precise modalities and further action required to bring to an end as rapidly as possible the unlawful presence of the State of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.”

To assist the General Assembly and the Security Council in determining appropriate modalities and actions, the Commission will report on the implications of this advisory opinion for the responsibility the State of Israel, the State of Palestine, third States, and where appropriate business entities, and the UN.

XIV. UN Palestinian Rights Committee Bureau Welcomes Advisory Opinion, Calls for Rapid Action by the International Community

Below is the [statement](#) by the Bureau of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People issued on 23 July.

The Committee Bureau welcomes the [Advisory Opinion](#) of the [International Court of Justice \(ICJ\)](#) of 19 July 2024 on the legal consequences arising from Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, determining that Israel's long occupation of the Palestinian territory (OPT) since 1967 is unlawful and that Israel must end it as rapidly as possible. This landmark Advisory Opinion is an important milestone in the Palestinian people's long struggle for justice.

In the Advisory Opinion, the Court, inter alia, urges Israel to cease immediately all new settlement activities, evacuate all settlers, and make reparation for the damage caused to all the natural or legal persons concerned in the OPT. The Bureau underscores the imperative of respect for these calls and compliance by Israel with its international legal obligations.

To uphold the international legal system and safeguard peace and security, the Bureau also calls on all States to follow the Court's advice by not recognizing the unlawful presence of Israel in the OPT as legal and refraining any support that would sustain this situation. Protecting Palestinian land rights and its contiguity is essential for realizing Palestinian rights. For Member States yet to act, promptly recognizing the State of Palestine is a crucial step.

The world's highest UN judicial body determined that the unlawful occupation must end, affirming the longstanding views of the overwhelming majority of Member States, the Palestinian people, UN Special Rapporteurs and experts, scholars, civil society organizations, and a [legal study commissioned by the Committee](#), and holding Israel, the occupying Power, accountable for decades of well-documented human rights violations and grave breaches of international humanitarian law.

The ICJ Advisory Opinion comes at a time when the war in Gaza is inflicting Palestinians unimaginable human loss and hardship, while heightened settler violence, systematic displacement and dispossession continue in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, underscoring the urgent need for international action to halt and reverse the occupation in all its manifestations. The occupation violates and impedes the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and threatens the viability of a two-State solution as enshrined in UN resolutions.

Urgent and concerted international action must follow the Court's Advisory Opinion. The Bureau calls on the General Assembly, which [requested the Advisory Opinion](#), and the Security Council to urgently consider the specific measures needed to end this unlawful occupation as fast as possible. The Committee stands ready to implement the mandate of the General Assembly in this endeavour.

XV. OHCHR condemns the repeated displacement of civilians in Khan Younis

On 23 July, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory issued the following [press release](#).

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights condemns the repeated displacement pursuant to an evacuation order by the Israeli military to civilians in northeast Khan Younis. The evacuation order was issued

in the context of ongoing attacks by the Israeli military and gave no time for civilians to know from which areas they were required to leave or where they should go. Despite the evacuation order, Israeli military operations continued in and around the area unabated. The evacuation order also covered parts of Salah al-Deen Road, which has been one of two main routes vital for the transport and distribution of aid, raising concerns that delivery and provision of desperately needed humanitarian assistance will be further reduced or prevented.

Since 21 July, Israeli airstrikes have reportedly intensified in Khan Younis. On 22 July, multiple airstrikes were reported, including in Bani Suhaila, Al Qarara and Abasan Al Kabira, along with the intensification of shelling in eastern Khan Younis. Around the same time, the Israeli military issued an evacuation order for areas in eastern Khan Younis, including parts of the area that they had unilaterally designated a “humanitarian zone”, claiming that armed Palestinians were firing projectiles from these areas towards Israel. According to Gaza Ministry of Health, by 1920 hours on 22 July, Israeli airstrikes and shelling of Khan Younis had resulted in the killing of at least 70 Palestinians, including women and children, while injuring at least 200 others, some in a critical condition.

Many of those displaced as a result of the latest evacuation order have been displaced countless times. Many have been forced to head in the direction of Al Mawasi area of Khan Younis, which has little or no infrastructure to support the masses of civilians who have been already displaced there and where there is little access to shelter or to basic, life-saving humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, despite Al Mawasi, Khan Younis being declared a “humanitarian zone” by the Israeli military, it continues to conduct airstrikes and shelling into the area. As the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has stated previously, there is no safe place in Gaza.

Confusing mass evacuation orders issued by a party that is concurrently increasing the intensity of its attacks on the areas from which evacuation is ordered and through which people must move place civilians in more danger and may increase the harm to civilians. This raises serious concerns regarding Israel’s compliance with its obligation to take all feasible precautions to avoid, and in any event to minimize, incidental loss of civilian life and injury to civilians.

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights reminds Israel that in the conduct of its military operations, constant care must be taken to spare the civilian population, civilians and civilian objects. In this regard, where evacuations are required to ensure the security of the affected civilians or for imperative military reasons, it must take reasonable steps to allow people to move safely.

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights also reminds Palestinian armed groups that the indiscriminate firing of projectiles into Israel or using the presence of civilians in an attempt to shield themselves from attack also constitutes violations of International Humanitarian Law.

XVI. Children and families face new horrors in the Gaza Strip, UNICEF Chief warns

On 24 July, UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell issued the following [statement](#).

With each passing week, children and families face new horrors in the Gaza Strip. The devastating attacks on schools and internally displaced sites continue, reportedly killing hundreds more Palestinians, many of them women and children, and leaving already overwhelmed hospitals buckling under the strain.

We see children who withstood previous injuries only to be hurt again. Doctors and nurses with no resources, struggling to save lives. Thousands of boys and girls sick, hungry, injured, or separated from their families. The violence and deprivation are leaving permanent scars on their vulnerable bodies and minds. And now, with a breakdown in sanitation and sewage treatment, the polio virus joins the list of threats, especially for the thousands of unvaccinated children.

As families are repeatedly forced to move to escape the immediate violence, the humanitarian situation is beyond catastrophic.

Humanitarian agencies, including UNICEF, are doing everything we can to respond, but the dire situation and attacks against humanitarian personnel continue to obstruct our efforts. Just yesterday, a clearly marked UNICEF vehicle was hit by bullets while waiting at a designated holding point near the Wadi Gaza checkpoint. It was one of two vehicles on the way to pick up five young children to reunite them with their father after their mother was killed. Fortunately, no one was injured, and the team managed to reunite the family. Yet in this incident, like others before it, the humanitarian consequences could have been horrific, for the children we serve, and for our teams.

Simply put – we do not have the necessary conditions in the Gaza Strip for a robust humanitarian response. The flow of aid must be unimpeded and access must be regular and safe.

For almost nine months, aid has trickled into Gaza. Civilians have been deprived of supplies. The commercial sector has been decimated. This has led to growing competition for what little is available, the smuggling of goods into the Gaza Strip, and now the increasingly organized looting of aid supplies. This not only impedes our efforts to reach vulnerable families but puts our teams and the civilians we are supporting at risk.

The challenge is exacerbated by the operating conditions on the ground. At least 278 aid workers in the Gaza Strip have already been killed – a record number – while others are put in harm's way, or prevented from doing their jobs.

We need an immediate improved security environment, including security for aid delivery trucks, to allow aid workers to safely reach the communities they intend to serve.

Most critically, we need an immediate and sustainable ceasefire. We call on all parties to this conflict to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law. They must protect civilians and the infrastructure they rely on. This includes ensuring civilians receive the essentials they need to survive – food, water, nutrition treatment, shelter, and health care – through safe and unimpeded humanitarian operations.

It is long past time for this crisis to end, for hostages to be returned to their families and for the children of Gaza to have a healthy and secure future.

XVII. Deputy UN Special Coordinator calls for ceasefire in Gaza, humanitarian access, hostage release during Security Council meeting

Below is the [briefing](#) of the Deputy Special Coordinator for The Middle East Peace Process, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, Muhannad Hadi, delivered to the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East on 26 July.

The asks of the United Nations have been repeated by the Secretary General and UN Principals time and again since 7 October:

1. A ceasefire
2. The ability to provide aid to the Palestinians in Gaza in line with the Humanitarian principles
3. An immediate and unconditional release of hostages

The asks are neither new nor impossible. Allow me to begin by sharing some voices from Gaza.

“In my shelter, I hear women cry all night for help.”

“We wake up every day just to search for food and water.”

“As a mother I am forced to witness my child starve and cry all night long.”

“We want the war to stop and dream of the day that we can go back to our homes in the North.”

“I went 4 months without taking a shower.”

“We have to cut our hair due to lice and lack of shampoo and hygiene material”

These are just some of the things that women told me when I met them in Deir al Balah in Gaza on the 9th of July.

All of them spoke about the lack of safety, dignity, privacy, in overcrowded camps. Many women said that they had suicidal thoughts. And their deep suffering – especially as parents, is that they cannot protect their children. And that is the duty of all parents to their children.

Thousands of these children have sustained horrific injuries such as third-degree burns, amputated limbs, and profound mental trauma. Sadly, many of the amputations would not have been necessary if adequate medical care had been available. The children who die often do so slowly and painfully. The ones who survive will have long-life disabilities and sad futures.

Six hundred and twenty-five thousand children have been deprived of an entire school year of education. Needless to say that a child without an education is a child without a future.

Children wander around IDP [internally displaced people] sites 24/7, often unaccompanied, exposed to huge risks and further injuries from playing in rubble filled with unexploded ordnance. They are also at risk of contracting dangerous diseases such as polio from mountains of garbage and rivers of sewage that flow through IDP settlements.

Everyone in Gaza is exposed to risks of injury and disease.

Those who survive the bombs and bullets still face the threat of hunger, unsanitary conditions and lack of healthcare. People with existing medical conditions, such as cancer, kidney failure or diabetes, are not getting the treatment they need. And more than tens of thousands of patients require immediate Medevac.

The overcrowding of IDP sites has increased community tensions and violence, including gender-based violence. As a result of the war, there is no public order anymore. What public order can we expect from two million people, who are constantly forced to move around a devastated strip of narrow land, during heavy fighting? And without public order there will never be accountability and protection.

Protection is urgently needed for the civilian population in Gaza, but also for humanitarian operations. Humanitarian staff and assets must be protected from all forms of violent attacks.

Among the destruction of social fabric and infrastructure, the UN and NGOs are sparing no effort to provide life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable. We know what needs to be done to aid the people in Gaza, but there is a gulf between what should be done, and what humanitarians can do. The commitment or willingness of the aid workers is not an issue, it's the inability to achieve the mandate, and that is beyond our control.

My predecessors and colleagues – early in this conflict – warned about a lack of an enabling environment. Almost ten months into this crisis, a safe enabling environment for the provision of humanitarian assistance still does not exist in Gaza. As one of my colleagues put it: “it's as if our kneecaps were smashed, yet they told us to jump.”

UNRWA has been shouldering the burden of this crisis. The campaign against UNRWA, attacks against its premises, and legislative efforts to declare UNRWA as a terrorist organization to end its operations – is utterly unacceptable and endangers our operations. As the Secretary General said before, UNRWA is the backbone of our operations in Palestine.

Today the UN is not in a position to provide the necessary assistance to the people in Gaza, let alone to scale up, unless specific factors are in place. The enabling factors required for humanitarian operations are not new.

First and foremost, we need protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure including protection of all humanitarian staff and assets. It is the responsibility of the warring parties to protect humanitarian actors. Duty of care of all humanitarian staff is one of our biggest concerns. Today, the risks inside Gaza are unacceptable. To mitigate these risks, we need systems and equipment, among other things.

Second, the unhindered and safe reception, dispatch and delivery of all humanitarian assistance must be immediately ensured. Current procedures in place for getting aid and fuel consignments from crossings to people in need are cumbersome, dangerous and costly. All crossings must be utilized simultaneously, with streamlined procedures, including Rafah crossing. Rafah must also be re-opened for the medical evacuation of patients, and the movement of people, humanitarian workers, goods and fuel.

In order to expedite the delivery of aid, we have been asking that our trucks are allowed to drive directly from Egypt and Jordan to the humanitarian destinations inside Gaza. Aid should not wait. We have also repeatedly asked for all checkpoints within Gaza to be open simultaneously, to enable movement from the north to the south, and vice versa.

Third, there should be no limitations on the amount and type of humanitarian items that can go into Gaza. Today, we are still struggling to bring in certain medical devices and supplies plus spare parts to repair civilian infrastructure.

Fourth, without visas for all UN staffers and NGOs, workers won't be able to carry out their duties.

The list of pre-requisites is long. Humanitarian aid alone cannot sustain a population that lacks all basic services and utilities, especially not under the prevailing conditions in Gaza. Whatever shape the conflict may take in the near future, humanitarians must be able to safely access populations in need wherever they are in Gaza, and throughout the Strip.

In closing, Mr. President, I would like to reiterate that the United Nations, and our partners in Gaza, will never give up. We will continue to provide desperately needed assistance. But we will need a safe enabling environment to do so. The human impact of this conflict cannot be overstated. The impact will haunt us, all of us, not for years, but for generations to come.

We need a ceasefire, the ability to deliver aid to the Palestinians in line with humanitarian principles, and the immediate and unconditional release of hostages. And all parties must fulfill their obligations under international humanitarian law. This includes protecting civilians, ensuring their basic needs are met, allowing them to leave for safer areas and allowing them to return, as soon as circumstances allow.

XVIII. Concerted efforts to dismantle UNRWA continue unabated, the agency's Deputy Commissioner-General warns Security Council

Below is the [briefing](#) of UNRWA Deputy Commissioner-General for Operational Support Antonia De Meo delivered to the Security Council on 26 July.

Thank you for giving UNRWA this opportunity to brief the Security Council at this pivotal time.

UNRWA is the backbone of the humanitarian response in Gaza, but it is facing enormous challenges. Gaza is in ruins, [and] the threat of a larger regional war looms. At the same time, the Agency is under unprecedented attack, including imminent threat of being expelled from occupied East Jerusalem and being designated a terrorist organization by the Israeli parliament. Our operating space in the occupied Palestinian territory is shrinking by the day.

These developments demand the urgent attention – and action – of this Council.

For nearly 10 months now, Palestinians and Israelis have lived through untold suffering, grief, sorrow, and loss. More than 2 million people in Gaza remain trapped in an endless nightmare of death and destruction on a staggering scale.

Their lives are dominated by fear, thirst, hunger, disease, dehumanization, lack of basic sanitation, and repeated displacement. It's a relentless and often hourly struggle, day in and day out. Famine remains a risk, including in southern Gaza. Communicable diseases are on the rise.

Children are bearing the brunt, with 625,000 deeply traumatized children out of school. Prior to October 7th, half of them attended UNRWA schools. With this war coming so soon after the COVID-19 pandemic, we risk depriving an entire generation of girls and boys of formal education – sowing the seeds of hatred, resentment, and future conflict.

Education cannot wait. That is why, even amidst the enormous challenges of war, we are committed, together with our UN partners, to resume learning for all the children of Gaza. It starts next week with providing mental health and psychosocial support; transitions to teaching reading, writing and math in informal settings; and culminates in a return to formal education in schools.

The Security Council has already adopted several resolutions aimed at ending this war through a ceasefire, the release of all hostages, and the scaling up of humanitarian aid. UNRWA has thousands of staff on the ground, spearheading the humanitarian operation in close cooperation with other UN agencies. We have welcomed the adoption of these resolutions in New York. But in Gaza, we have seen woefully little impact. Instead, the fighting continues without reprieve, and the suffering continues to mount.

As my colleague, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Muhannad Hadi, will describe in greater detail, delivering humanitarian aid remains an impossible task amidst military operations, insecurity, lawlessness, damaged and destroyed infrastructure, fuel shortages, and access and telecommunications restrictions.

In Gaza, the blatant disregard for international humanitarian law is now commonplace. Women, children, journalists, humanitarian workers – all continue to pay a tragically high price. UNRWA is no exception. 199 colleagues have now been killed, the vast majority with their families. Nearly two-thirds of the Agency's premises – some 190 buildings – have been hit, some twice. Many of our schools are demolished and can no longer be used as schools. In the past two weeks alone, 8 UNRWA schools, all serving as shelters for displaced people, have been struck. Our headquarters offices in Gaza are destroyed beyond recognition. More than 560 displaced people, including many women and children, have been killed while sheltering under the UN flag. And just this week, two UN convoys heading north were shot at, despite coordination, deconfliction, and authorization from the Israeli Army.

Humanitarian workers must never be targets of war. They must be protected at all times and in all locations. But in Gaza, too often they have come under attack, been injured, and even killed. We have said it many times before, and I repeat it again: No place is safe in Gaza. No one is safe, including humanitarian aid workers.

Concerted efforts to dismantle UNRWA continue unabated. As I speak today, many UN staff, as well as staff of NGOs, have been refused visas to enter Israel. The visa of the UNRWA Commissioner-General expired more than a month ago and has not yet been renewed. And for UN staff who have been granted visas, most are only two or three months long, requiring repeated and lengthy bureaucratic processes.

Misinformation and disinformation about UNRWA is spreading on social media, at times crossing the line of incitement to violence. This puts all our colleagues at serious risk, especially in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Earlier this week, on July 22nd, Israel's parliament approved in first reading three draft legislative bills related to UNRWA: one seeking to ban UNRWA operations in occupied East Jerusalem; a second seeking to

revoke UN privileges and immunities afforded to UNRWA since 1949; and a third designating UNRWA a terrorist organization. To become law, these draft bills must still pass through second and third readings by the Knesset.

These bills make a travesty of the multilateral responsibilities of Member States. They erode the very foundations of international law and multilateral norms. If these bills pass – which could happen as early as next week – the ramifications will be dire and immediate: They will put all UNRWA staff and the Agency’s General Assembly mandate in direct danger. And while UNRWA will face the impacts today, make no mistake: the entire UN system around the world will feel the impacts tomorrow. We cannot afford this to become a new standard for future humanitarian operations in conflict zones across the world.

The campaign against UNRWA is often framed by detractors as motivated by the Agency’s alleged failure to uphold the humanitarian principle of neutrality. Following serious allegations that several UNRWA personnel in Gaza were involved in the abhorrent attacks against Israel on October 7th, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) opened an investigation, and the Secretary-General launched an Independent Review of how UNRWA upholds neutrality in its work. The OIOS investigation into the allegations against these individuals is ongoing. If any of these allegations is proven to be true, this would constitute an appalling betrayal of Palestine Refugees, UNRWA, and UN values.

Meanwhile, the Independent Review published its findings in April. It confirmed that UNRWA – and I quote – “possesses a more developed approach to neutrality than other similar UN or NGO entities”. The Review further emphasized that protecting neutrality is a shared responsibility between the United Nations and Member States, especially Member States where UN entities are based, including Israel. UNRWA is fully committed to implementing the Review’s recommendations together with Member States in this spirit of shared responsibility. And to this end, we thank the members of this Council for signing the statement on “shared commitments to UNRWA”.

Together we must push back against calls to dismantle the Agency. UNRWA is targeted because of its role in safeguarding the rights of Palestine Refugees, and because it embodies the international community’s commitment to a just and lasting political solution. UNRWA exists because a political solution does not. It exists because a Palestinian State that can deliver public services in its place does not.

To reopen the pathway to peace, we need the support of this Council. Please allow me to conclude with three asks urging you:

First, to persist in your efforts to secure a ceasefire. This should bring desperately needed respite to the people of Gaza and the region, the immediate release of all hostages, and an increase in the flow of humanitarian supplies and commercial goods into Gaza.

Second, to protect the mandate of UNRWA including within the framework of a transition. UNRWA must continue providing services until a political solution is at hand. There is no credible alternative to UNRWA in Gaza and across the region. We need political and financial support now more than ever to continue our vital task of serving one of the most vulnerable communities in the world. And we hope that this Council will speak out in one voice against attacks – legislative or otherwise – on the Agency.

Third and finally, to advance a peaceful solution to this seven-decade long conflict. The longer the war in Gaza persists, the further we drift from achieving a peaceful solution that would bring Palestinians and Israelis together, recognize our shared humanity, heal, and learn to live side by side in peace and security. This solution must also – at long last – bring an end to the plight of Palestine Refugees.

XIX. UNESCO inscribes Monastery of Saint Hilarion/Tell Umm Amer in Gaza on List of World Heritage in Danger

On 26 July, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) issued the following [press release](#).

The UNESCO World Heritage Committee, meeting in New Delhi, India, has decided to inscribe the site ‘The Monastery of Saint Hilarion/Tell Umm Amer’ in Palestine simultaneously on the World Heritage List and on the List of World Heritage in Danger. This decision recognizes both the site’s value and the need to protect it from danger.

In view of the threats to this heritage site posed by the ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip, the World Heritage Committee used the emergency inscription procedure provided for in the World Heritage Convention.

In accordance with the terms of the Convention, its 195 States Parties are committed to avoid taking any deliberate measures likely to cause direct or indirect damage to this site, which is now inscribed on the World Heritage List, and to assist in its protection.

Inclusion on the List of World Heritage in Danger automatically opens the door to enhanced international technical and financial assistance mechanisms to guarantee the protection of the property and, if necessary, to help facilitate its rehabilitation.

The monastery of Saint Hilarion/Tell Umm Amer, one of the oldest sites in the Middle East, was founded by Saint Hilarion and was home to the first monastic community in the Holy Land. Situated at the crossroads of the main routes of trade and exchange between Asia and Africa, it was a centre for religious, cultural and economic exchanges, illustrating the prosperity of desert monastic sites in the Byzantine period.

In December 2023, at its 18th session, UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict had already decided to grant ‘provisional enhanced protection’ to the monastery under the 1954 Hague Convention and its Second Protocol.

XX. Israel must immediately end practices of forced eviction in Jerusalem, says OHCHR

On 30 July, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Occupied Palestinian Territory issued the following [press release](#).

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is concerned that more than 80 Palestinian families face forced eviction from their homes in the Silwan area of occupied East Jerusalem, facilitated by the unlawful application of discriminatory Israeli laws against Palestinians in the occupied territory.

Overall, around 87 Palestinian families, totalling approximately 600-680 individuals, are facing legal proceedings initiated by settlers to evict them from their homes in Batn al-Hawa. On 9 and 10 July, the Jerusalem District Court rejected the appeals of the Gheith, Abu Nab and Al-Rajabi families against eviction rulings in lawsuits submitted by Jewish Israeli settlers demanding the families’ eviction. These families live in nine residential units accommodating over 80 Palestinians, including children, women, elders, and residents with special needs.

In one example of particular concern, authorities are escalating steps towards the forced eviction of the Shehadeh family – consisting of 15 people, including 8 children – following the Israeli High Court’s rejection of a petition appealing a Supreme Court decision of 11 April 2024 that had ordered the Shehadeh family to vacate their four-story home in Batn al-Hawa, Silwan, East Jerusalem, in favour of Jewish Israeli settlers. On 14 July,

the family received an eviction notice demanding that they vacate their home within 20 days, at the expiry of which the settlers could have the eviction order enforced.

These cases are examples of an ongoing systematic settlers' campaign and application of a range of laws discriminatorily (some dating to the Ottoman and British Mandate periods), including Israel's Absentees' Property Law and the 1970 Legal and Administrative Matters Law, to uproot Palestinians from their homes, take over their property and implant Israeli settlers in the heart of Palestinian neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem. International humanitarian law prohibits Israel from imposing its own laws in occupied territory, which includes the application of Israeli laws to evict Palestinians from their homes. Furthermore, the laws in themselves are inherently discriminatory against Palestinians, in violation of Israel's international human rights obligations.

XXI. 39 UN human rights experts hail ICJ declaration on illegality of Israel's presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as "historic" for Palestinians and international law

On 30 July, Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967; Reem Alsalem, Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences; Tlaleng Mofokeng, Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; Ben Saul, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism; 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; Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Margaret Satterthwaite, Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers; Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Siobhán Mullally, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing; Elisa Morgera, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change; Heba Hagrass, Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities; George Katrougalos, Independent expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order; Farida Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on the right to education; Cecilia Baillet, Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity; Astrid Puentes, Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment; Olivier De Schutter, Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights; Surya Deva, Special Rapporteur on the right to development; 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; 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, Sorch MacLeod, Working Group on the use of mercenaries; Barbara G. Reynolds (Chair), Bina D'Costa, Dominique Day, Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, Fernanda Hopenhaym (Chairperson), Pichamon Yeophantong, Damilola Olawuyi, and Robert McCorquodale and Elzbieta Karska, Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises issued the following joint [press release](#).

Israel and other UN Member States must immediately comply with the authoritative determination by the [International Court of Justice](#) (ICJ) on Israel's presence in the occupied Palestinian territory, independent human rights experts* said today.

The [landmark ruling](#) of 19 July 2024 declared that Israel's occupation of the Gaza strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is unlawful, along with the associated settlement regime, annexation and use of natural resources. The Court added that Israel's legislation and measures violate the international prohibition on racial segregation and apartheid. The ICJ mandated Israel to end its occupation, dismantle its settlements, provide full reparations to Palestinian victims and facilitate the return of displaced people.

"The advisory opinion reaffirms peremptory norms prohibiting annexation, settlements, racial segregation and apartheid, and should be seen as declaratory in nature and binding on Israel and all States supporting the occupation," the experts said.

The Court refuted the notion that Palestinian self-determination must be achieved solely through bilateral negotiations with Israel – a requirement that has subjected Palestinians to violence, dispossession and rights violations for 30 years.

“The Court has finally reaffirmed a principle that seemed unclear, even to the United Nations: Freedom from foreign military occupation, racial segregation and apartheid is absolutely non-negotiable,” the experts said.

They welcomed the Court’s recognition that converting occupation into annexation by demolishing homes, denying housing permits, and land grabs, violates the *jus cogens* norm prohibiting the use of force to annex occupied territory.

“May this historic ruling begin the realisation of the Palestinian people’s fundamental right to self-determination, and peace premised on freedom for all,” the experts said. The ICJ advisory opinion will serve as a critical tool to restore respect for international law, especially at this crucial moment when the Court is also considering Israel’s alleged violations of the Genocide Convention, they added.

The experts recalled that the opinion was delivered 20 years after the same Court ruled on the illegality of Israel’s wall, an authoritative ruling that was largely disregarded by Israel and UN Member States, allowing impunity to reign.

“Since the Court ruling on 19 July, Israel has intensified attacks on the civilian population in Gaza and their natural resources,” they warned.

“Israel must comply with this advisory opinion, and other ICJ orders issued this year,” they said. “Israel must stop acting as if uniquely above the law.

“While the UN Security Council and General Assembly will consider strategies to ensure a swift end to the illegal occupation”, the experts said, “States must immediately review all diplomatic, political, and economic ties with Israel, inclusive of business and finance, pension funds, academia and charities.”

They called for an [*arms embargo*](#), an end to all other commercial [sic] that may damage the Palestinians, and targeted sanctions, including asset freezes, on Israeli individuals and entities involved in illegal occupation and racial segregation and apartheid policies.

They further called for investigations and prosecutions against those involved in crimes in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly dual citizens serving in Israel’s military or involved in settler violence.

“The Court’s findings should also be widely disseminated to ensure that the illegality of Israel’s presence in the occupied territory is fully understood at all levels of the government and reflected in public documents and education systems.”

“Laws and policies that penalise opposition to or impede advocacy against Israel’s occupation and apartheid must be rescinded,” the experts said.

Encouraging States to engage with the International Criminal Court, the experts called for a protective presence for Palestinians and demanded access for independent experts and mechanisms to the occupied Palestinian territory.

They also called on the international community to challenge Israel’s deliberate efforts to rewrite the rules of international humanitarian law, using it as “humanitarian camouflage” to legitimise potentially genocidal violence against all Palestinians.

“For too long, Palestinians have been held hostage to *realpolitik*, while Israel has made a mockery of international order and the normative framework of international law,” the experts said. “May the ICJ advisory

opinion be the catalyst for renewed international action to restore and preserve an international order premised on respect for international law.”
