

# **STATEMENT TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL**

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THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

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**OPEN DEBATE  
ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST,  
INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION**

New York, 29 October 2024

Mr. President,

Distinguished Council members,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I congratulate Switzerland for the October presidency of the Security Council and thank His Excellency, Minister Ignazio Cassis, for presiding over this meeting.

I also thank the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland for his briefing and tireless advocacy for peace and justice, including a just solution to the question of Palestine.

Distinguished Members of the Council,

Today, I bring **three critical messages** from the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, addressing the profound urgency to reach a ceasefire in Gaza, the escalating threat to the United Nations operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and the imperative for implementation of the significant General Assembly resolution regarding the ICJ Advisory Opinion.

For more than a year we have witnessed unimaginable destruction and civilian casualties and gross violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Hopes for an **immediate and lasting ceasefire have all but vanished, in spite of the calls of this Security Council, the**

## **General Assembly and the international community at large.**

The assault by Israel, the occupying Power, on the Gaza Strip has reached unprecedented levels, with northern Gaza now facing near-total devastation. An estimated 400,000 Palestinians are being forcibly displaced before our eyes. This is not an “evacuation” but forced displacement and ethnic cleansing – civilians are being forced to leave their homes and shelters under bombs and gunfire and starved with little or no aid.

Most alarming is the Security Council's passive tolerance of the killing and maiming of civilian and wanton destruction of civilian property, repeatedly and wrongly justified by Israel and other members as “self-defense”, and the fading hopes for progress in interminably sabotaged negotiations for a ceasefire. The critical urgency to enforce a ceasefire has been completely lost, eclipsed by the relentless violence by Israel’s occupying forces and a soaring Palestinian civilian death toll. Instead, the bloodshed continues unabated, marking a profound failure of our collective humanity and the Council’s fundamental Charter duty.

Our Committee Bureau’s analysis of OCHA data shows that between 10 June 2024 – the date on which Security Council ceasefire Resolution 2735 was adopted – and 25 October, 5,723 Palestinians were killed and 15,832 were injured in Gaza. This is unconscionable and it has happened on our watch. This devastating toll has now surpassed 42,847 deaths since 7 October, representing not just a statistic but the tragic loss of

men, women, children, and elderly persons—innocent lives that could have been saved if the Security Council had enforced its own ceasefire with resolve and urgency.

The failure to implement resolution 2735 has not only led to continued bloodshed and the destruction and loss of civilian lives in Gaza, which independent experts, scholars and jurists around the world believe amount to genocide, but has also undermined the very credibility of this Council and the multilateral system. Each life lost is a testament to our collective failure to uphold the principles of the UN Charter and ensure the protection of civilians.

The Security Council must act decisively to end this horrific war. It is our duty under the UN Charter to demand an immediate ceasefire, protect civilians and uphold international law. The Council's hesitation has enabled the weaponization of humanitarian assistance and starvation and the forced displacement of Palestinians by Israel, the occupying Power, which threatens to become permanent, as threatened by Israeli officials who now boast about their plans to build settlements in Gaza.

The urgency cannot be overstated – this is a matter of life and death for millions, and a direct threat to international peace and security. International humanitarian law is being violated with impunity, with perpetrators often shielded by double standards that undermine the rule of law and the multilateral system. The divisions in this body are testimony to this reality.

We call on all Members of this Organization to unite to act now and prevent further atrocities.

The failure to act threatens not only the credibility of the United Nations but also the recently adopted “Pact for the Future.” The values enshrined in the UN Charter are being flagrantly disregarded in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and now there are threats to dismantle the very institutions providing vital humanitarian aid, including the United Nations system operating there.

We strongly condemn **Israel’s threats to the United Nations**, especially its unlawful attempts to ban and abolish UNRWA, which remains the only lifeline for millions of Palestine refugees and displaced Palestinians. Since the conflict began, 464 incidents have impacted UNRWA premises in Gaza, including military interference and attacks that have killed and injured civilians and damaged and destroyed UNRWA properties, including shelters for nearly 2 million displaced Palestinians. UNRWA’s critical work is being impeded and obstructed and with 233 of its staff killed as of 21 October. The Secretary-General has been publicly targeted and vilified.

We condemn Israel’s ban on UNRWA, Gaza’s primary lifeline amid a deepening crisis. This unprecedented unilateral Israeli decision endangers Gaza’s fragile aid distribution, contravenes the UN Charter, and violates Israel’s obligations under international law. We demand that the Security Council reject it.

We urge the Security Council to stand firm in support of the Secretary-General and UNRWA's mandate, which has been supported by international consensus for decades. Immediate, unimpeded humanitarian access must be ensured, and the UN's role in the region must be protected.

The Council must reject any attempts to intimidate or sideline the UN's lawful and legitimate humanitarian efforts and commendable efforts to protect civilians.

Mr. President,

We commend the **General Assembly's adoption of resolution ES-10/24 of 18 September 2024** on the ICJ Advisory Opinion on Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the illegality of the Israeli occupation and we urge the immediate implementation of this landmark decision. The Committee is collaborating with Member States on implementation, including efforts to encourage Member States to submit proposals for inclusion in the Secretary-General's upcoming report.

We therefore appeal to the Security Council to fulfill its responsibility by urgently considering actions needed to swiftly end Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territory, foremost through the implementation of its own numerous resolutions.

Additionally, we welcome Türkiye's initiative, in cooperation with 26 Member States, to jointly call for a halt to

arms transfers to Israel and pressing for an immediate ceasefire, efforts of which are in line with the GA resolution and deserve support.

Distinguished Members of the Council,

The Committee will once again commemorate worldwide the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November. This year, the event will be marked by even deeper mourning as the Israeli military assault on Gaza and the West Bank continues unabated. At UNHQ in New York, we will commemorate the event on 26 November at ECOSOC Chamber and I invite all of you to join us in reaffirming our support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and independence, and to honor the UN's enduring commitment to their cause until a just solution is realized in conformity with international law and the relevant UN resolutions.

In closing, let me stress once again that only dialogue and justice, not violence, will resolve the Palestine question.

This is why we, in the Committee, support the Secretary-General's principled position that there can be no "Day After" in Gaza without a political horizon. The Security Council must take the lead in efforts to urgently restart dialogue to address the Palestine question.

A lasting peace in the region will only be achieved through a two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side

in peace and security based on the 1967 borders and with a just solution for the Palestine refugees, whose plight we continue to painfully witness today in this ongoing Nakba.

I thank you.