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

Security Council
Seventy-ninth year

Identical letters dated 5 November 2024 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Israel, the occupying Power, is a predator state, an aggressor state, a terror state and a rogue state.

For 395 days, Israeli occupying forces (IOF), under direct command of Israel's political and military leaders, have been massacring, starving and ethnically cleansing the Palestinian civilian population and destroying civilian infrastructure across the Occupied Palestinian Territory on a scale of savagery unseen since World War II, a genocide perpetrated before the eyes of the world.

The catastrophic situation in the Gaza Strip becomes more grave by the minute as Israel continues its assault on every semblance of life and on all those who seek to preserve life.

Undeterred by any demand to cease fire, breaching every rule of international law and every Security Council resolution, including resolution [2735 \(2024\)](#), Israel is on a frenzied spree, turning north Gaza in particular into a veritable killing field – from Jabaliya to Beit Hanoun to Beit Lahia and every inch in between. Estimates are that up to 1,300 Palestinians have been killed in north Gaza in the past month as Israel implements the so-called “General's Plan” to completely erase the Palestinian population there.

The Principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), comprised of 15 United Nations and humanitarian organizations, warned on 1 November: “The situation unfolding in North Gaza is apocalyptic. The area has been under siege for almost a month, denied basic aid and life-saving supplies while bombardment and other attacks continue. Just in the past few days, hundreds of Palestinians have been killed, most of them women and children, and thousands have once again been forcibly displaced. ... The entire Palestinian population in North Gaza is at imminent risk of dying from disease, famine and violence” (see annex).



This is the horrific, undeniable reality. IOF are systematically targeting civilians, as well as the humanitarian lifeline that could ensure their survival. Israel is killing and wounding Palestinians en masse in gruesome attacks, including the massacre of 93 Palestinians, among them at least 25 children, in one air strike on a five-story residential building in Beit Lahia on 29 October. Those not slaughtered in such attacks are forced on yet another desperate search for safe shelter in a place where none exists and where no civilian structure is off limits for the occupying army.

In fact, Israeli attacks on United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) schools turned shelters, hospitals, healthcare workers, aid convoys and humanitarians not only persist but are escalating. Even maternity hospitals and newborn infants are not spared. The latest was another attack on Kamal Adwan Hospital in Jabaliya on 4 November, where IOF terrorized and assaulted patients and medical staff, detained dozens of people, and caused vast destruction to one of the few hospitals still functioning in north Gaza, yet further proof of Israel's genocidal intent.

The casualty toll in Gaza since October 2023 has now surpassed 43,391 Palestinians killed and more than 102,347 injured by Israel, in addition to 732 Palestinians killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, by IOF and settler terrorists. Children and women remain the majority of victims.

At the same time, as part of its assault on the Palestinian people and their essentials of life, Israel has intensified its attacks on UNRWA on every front. The latest attack came in the form of the Knesset's adoption, on 28 October, of two bills aimed at nullifying the 1967 agreement between Israel and UNRWA for facilitation of its operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, stripping the Agency of its privileges and immunities and evicting it from its premises in occupied East Jerusalem, effectively outlawing its operations throughout the Territory and impeding its life-saving humanitarian assistance to the Palestine refugees it is mandated by the General Assembly to serve.

Israel does not hide its aims to not only break the backbone of international humanitarian operations in Gaza, but to destroy UNRWA in its entirety.

Targeting UNRWA is the immediate means to depriving Palestine refugees and internally displaced Palestinians in Gaza of the shelter and assistance that is keeping the population alive in the midst of a genocide. But it is also part and parcel of Israel's broader attack on the United Nations and international law-based order as a whole as it seeks to avert justice for the Palestinian people, including the refugees, while at the same time it seeks to evade any accountability for its heinous crimes against them.

This all-out assault on a United Nations agency by a Member State and its far-reaching, destructive humanitarian, political, legal and security implications have shaken the entire United Nations system, prompting a letter to the President of the General Assembly by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, on 28 October, warning, inter alia, that "the Agency is under such physical, political, and operational attack – unprecedented in United Nations history – that implementation of its mandate may become impossible without decisive intervention by the General Assembly. The consequences for Palestinians, for Israel, and for the region will be grave".

In this regard, IASC has also stressed that: "If implemented, such measures would be a catastrophe for the humanitarian response in Gaza, diametrically opposed to the United Nations Charter, with potential dire impacts on the human rights of the millions of Palestinians depending on UNRWA's assistance, and in violation of Israel's obligations under international law".

Moreover, IASC reaffirmed the universal view that there is no alternative to UNRWA and its indispensable role. This echoes the Secretary-General's 28 October

letter to the President of the General Assembly, stressing, inter alia, that “UNRWA is the principal means by which essential assistance is supplied to Palestine refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. There is currently no realistic alternative to UNRWA which could adequately provide the services and assistance required, whether it be other United Nations entities, other international organizations, or any other entity”, and recalling 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”, as per international law, including the Charter and Fourth Geneva Convention, and as authoritatively reaffirmed by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion of 19 July 2024. Thus, Israel’s actions against the Agency, with all of the attendant ramifications, constitute grave breaches of international law that require immediate action by the international community.

It cannot be that each and every statement – whether by governments or United Nations officials or international organizations or civil society – expressing shock and alarm at the grave developments is followed by only more shocking and alarming actions by Israel and more impunity.

Clearly, without accountability, Israel is becoming only more emboldened and more depraved. The right to life of every single Palestinian man, woman and child is being violated by this illegal occupation and its genocidal siege and aggression, with every life endangered. UNRWA, the United Nations and the international legal order are equally at risk from this wanton Israeli onslaught.

Occupied Palestine is ground zero in the fight to save the international legal order to protect all humankind from a return to the barbarism and savagery that preceded a world without the rule of the law, where the powerful trampled the weak without consequence. Only real accountability and tangible consequences for crimes perpetrated can halt this backsliding into a world of chaos with no protections for the most vulnerable among us, and no horizon for peace and security for anyone.

The Security Council must act now with urgency to meet the extreme gravity of this situation. The Council must act, under Chapter VII, to demand an immediate ceasefire and ensure compliance by all parties. It must act now to stop Israel’s slaughter, forced transfer and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people. It must ensure protection and immediate, unimpeded humanitarian assistance at scale through UNRWA, in accordance with its General Assembly mandate, in cooperation with all other United Nations agencies and international organizations providing assistance to the Palestinian people.

The Security Council will be widely supported in its actions by all peace-loving States and peoples who are urging action now to confront this grave threat to the life of every Palestinian and grave threat to the Middle East region and grave threat international peace and security.

This letter is in follow-up to our 851 letters on the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 ([A/55/432-S/2000/921](#)) to 21 October 2024 ([A/ES-10/1014-S/2024/761](#)), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations against our people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice. This illegal colonial occupation and apartheid regime must end now.

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

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

**Annex to the identical letters dated 5 November 2024 from the
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President
of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council**

**Statement by Principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee:
stop the assault on Palestinians in Gaza and on those trying to
help them**

New York, Geneva and Rome, 1 November 2024

We the leaders of 15 United Nations and humanitarian organizations urge, yet again, all parties fighting in Gaza to protect civilians, and call on the State of Israel to cease its assault on Gaza and on the humanitarians trying to help.

The situation unfolding in North Gaza is apocalyptic. The area has been under siege for almost a month, denied basic aid and life-saving supplies while bombardment and other attacks continue. Just in the past few days, hundreds of Palestinians have been killed, most of them women and children, and thousands have once again been forcibly displaced.

Hospitals have been almost entirely cut off from supplies and have come under attack, killing patients, destroying vital equipment, and disrupting life-saving services. Health workers and patients have been taken into custody. Fighting has also reportedly taken place inside hospitals.

Dozens of schools serving as shelters have been bombed or forcibly evacuated. Tents sheltering displaced families have been shelled, and people have been burned alive.

Rescue teams have been deliberately attacked and thwarted in their attempts to pull people buried under the rubble of their homes.

The needs of women and girls are overwhelming and growing every day. We have lost contact with those we support and those who provide lifesaving essential services for sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence.

And we have received reports of civilians being targeted while trying to seek safety, and of men and boys being arrested and taken to unknown locations for detention.

Livestock are also dying, crop lands have been destroyed, trees burned to the ground, and agri-food systems infrastructure has been decimated.

The entire Palestinian population in North Gaza is at imminent risk of dying from disease, famine and violence.

Humanitarian aid cannot keep up with the scale of the needs due to the access constraints. Basic, life-saving goods are not available. Humanitarians are not safe to do their work and are blocked by Israeli forces and by insecurity from reaching people in need.

In a further blow to the humanitarian response, the polio vaccination campaign has been delayed due to the fighting, putting the lives of children in the region at risk.

And this week, the Israeli Parliament adopted legislation that would ban UNRWA and revoke its privileges and immunities. If implemented, such measures would be a catastrophe for the humanitarian response in Gaza, diametrically opposed to the United Nations Charter, with potential dire impacts on the human rights of the

millions of Palestinians depending on UNRWA's assistance, and in violation of Israel's obligations under international law.

Let us be very clear: There is no alternative to UNRWA.¹

The blatant disregard for basic humanity and for the laws of war must stop.

International humanitarian law, including the rules of distinction, proportionality and precautions, must be respected. IHL obligations do not depend on reciprocity. No violation by one party ever releases the other from its legal obligations.

Attacks against civilians and what remains of civilian infrastructure in Gaza must stop.

Humanitarian relief must be facilitated, and we urge all parties to provide unimpeded access to affected people. Additionally, commercial goods must be allowed to enter Gaza.

The wounded and sick must receive the care they need. Medical personnel and hospitals must be spared. Hospitals should not turn into battlegrounds.

Unlawfully detained Palestinians must be released.

Israel must comply with the provisional orders and determinations of the International Court of Justice.

Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups must release the hostages immediately and unconditionally and must abide by international humanitarian law.

Member States must use their leverage to ensure respect for international law. This includes withholding arms transfers where there is a clear risk that such arms will be used in violation of international law.

The entire region is on the edge of a precipice. An immediate cessation of hostilities and a sustained, unconditional ceasefire are long overdue.

Signatories:

- Ms. Joyce Msuya, Acting Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- Ms. Nimo Hassan, MBE, Chair, International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)
- Mr. Jamie Munn, Executive Director, International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)
- Ms. Amy E. Pope, Director General, International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- Mr. Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- Ms. Abby Maxman, President and Chief Executive Officer, Oxfam
- Ms. Paula Gaviria Betancur, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (SR on HR of IDPs)
- Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

¹ The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East fully supports the statement.

- Ms. Anacláudia Rossbach, Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat)
 - Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
 - Dr. Natalia Kanem, Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
 - Ms. Catherine Russell, Executive Director, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)
 - Ms. Sima Bahous, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN Women
 - Ms. Cindy McCain, Executive Director, World Food Programme (WFP)
 - Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization (WHO)
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