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PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

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intergovernmental organizations
relevant to the question of Palestine

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I. Journalist safety is fundamental to press freedom, particularly in conflict zones like Gaza, says UN Palestinian Rights Committee Chair

On 1 November, Cheikh Niang, Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, sent the following [message](#) to the 2024 International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East convened in Geneva.

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Thank you for the opportunity to address the 2024 International Media Seminar on the critical issue of journalist safety and the media challenges surrounding the ongoing conflict in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which has persisted for 76 years. Today, we focus on the vital role of journalists and the immense obstacles they face in Gaza. Ensuring their safety is essential as we collectively strive for peace.

Journalist safety is fundamental to press freedom, particularly in conflict zones like Gaza.

Our Committee's position is grounded in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), which upholds the freedom to seek, receive, and share information. Unfortunately, the situation in Gaza and the West Bank starkly contrasts with these principles.

One year has passed since the events of 7 October 2023, when Palestinian militants attacked Israel, followed by a devastating Israeli response in Gaza. Since then, access to information has been severely curtailed. Journalists have been killed, newsrooms destroyed, foreign press blocked, and communications cut. Israeli forces, as the occupying power, have systematically dismantled Palestinian media infrastructure, silencing voices through restrictions, threats, targeted killings, and censorship.

In the past 380 days, over 130 Palestinian journalists have been killed by Israeli forces in Gaza. These were voices reporting on possible war crimes, silenced before their stories could be fully told. In the West Bank, 29 journalists have been detained, many harassed, intimidated, and placed under administrative detention. The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression has documented ill-treatment of detained journalists, including sexual and gender-based violence, particularly against women journalists.

Despite global outcry, none of the perpetrators, including the killers of journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, have been brought to justice.

For years, Israeli blockades and restrictions in the occupied Palestinian territories—including limitations on movement, checkpoints, and the destruction of infrastructure—have made it increasingly difficult for both local and international journalists to operate. Despite this, journalists in Gaza continue to report on the humanitarian crisis, often at great personal risk, providing the world with an accurate picture of the unfolding tragedy.

We honor their courage and recognize that their loss silences their stories and severely limits the public's access to the truth.

Despite Israeli repression, the world remains aware of the Palestine issue, largely due to the relentless efforts of journalists. Behind the headlines of conflict and humanitarian crises are courageous individuals risking their lives to document the suffering, destruction, and displacement of the Palestinian people.

Your support for press freedom is crucial. The work of journalists ensures that the world is informed of the grim realities in Gaza.

Our Committee's advocacy and awareness efforts depend on the narratives, visuals, and evidence you gather and share. To this end, we are deeply concerned for your safety and demand your freedom to work without fear of retaliation.

In addition to the physical risks, journalists today face rising challenges like disinformation, cyberattacks, increasing restrictions on press freedom, and the psychological toll of conflict reporting. Reports of Israeli-made Pegasus spyware used to hack the phones of human rights activists and journalists underscore the digital threats facing the media sector. This adds another layer of difficulty to an already dangerous profession.

As you engage in this seminar, I urge you to reflect on how we can overcome these challenges and ensure that the truth continues to be told. The voices of journalists reporting from Gaza and the West Bank are critical in ensuring the international community, including policymakers, fully understands the situation on the ground.

The Committee remains steadfast in advocating for the protection of journalists. Through our work at the United Nations and regular statements to the Security Council, we emphasize the urgent need to strengthen global legal frameworks that protect journalists in conflict zones. Our commitment to accurate and reliable information is vital in this age of rapid misinformation.

As physical dangers and media suppression increase, digital advocacy has become essential. Since 7 October 2023, our digital platforms have reached millions, with over 6 million pageviews on our website and active engagement on platforms like X (formerly Twitter) and YouTube. These efforts amplify critical discussions on international law, Israeli settlements, and the humanitarian crisis, ensuring that the truth reaches a global audience.

Our UNSPAL database, with over 44,500 documents, continues to be an invaluable resource for experts worldwide. Even when journalists are silenced, our digital outreach ensures that the realities from Gaza and the West Bank are accessible to the international community.

Free and undistorted access to information from journalists on the ground is essential for global understanding. By amplifying verified reports and UN data, we provide a reliable source amidst the noise of conflicting narratives. Together, we foster a more informed and empathetic global dialogue, shining light on issues that might otherwise remain hidden.

A Committee partnership with the media can be a crucial step in this regard.

As we approach the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, this year on 26 November, I invite each of you to explore the resources available on our platforms and engage with our content. This day offers a vital opportunity to highlight the importance of your work and to convey a clear message of global solidarity with the Palestinian people in their quest for freedom and independence.

I also encourage you to reflect on the words of the late Shireen Abu Akleh, who said: “While it may not be easy to change reality, journalism can bring people’s voices to the world.” We must amplify the voices of Palestinian journalists and ensure their stories continue to reach the world.

In conclusion, I reaffirm the Committee’s unwavering dedication to press freedom and the essential role of journalists in achieving lasting peace in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In these challenging times, your courage and commitment to the truth are more vital than ever. The Committee will continue appealing to the international community for urgent and coordinated efforts aimed at ending the Israeli occupation, achieving a two-State solution and a just, lasting, and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine in accordance with international law, relevant United Nations resolutions, and the Arab Peace Initiative, to bring an end to this historic and grave injustice.

II. Stop the assault on Palestinians in Gaza and on those trying to help them, plead the Principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

Following is the [statement](#) by the leaders of 15 United Nations and humanitarian organizations, members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee of 1 November.

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 agrifood 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.

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**)
- 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**)

III. OCHA spotlights efforts in 2024 to meet emergency needs amidst shrinking humanitarian space in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

On 6 November, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs issued the following [press release](#).

In 2024 the UN and partners called for a total of US \$3.42 billion to address the most urgent needs of more than three million people in the Gaza Strip (Gaza) and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The [Flash Appeal](#) outlined the estimated resource requirements to reduce human suffering and prevent further loss of life in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, based on the best available information at the time. The document assumed that security concerns and access limitations would continue through mid-

2024, then improve incrementally, and that efforts to implement Security Council Resolution 2720 (2023) would bear fruit.

This document highlights some of the work that was done by humanitarian actors in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) between January and June 2024. It is not a comprehensive report on all activities. Instead, it aims to spotlight some of the innovations and personal stories of how the UN, INGOs and NGOs have influenced the lives of people we seek to assist.

The landscape in the OPT has fundamentally changed since 7 October 2023. Decades of occupation, political instability, and isolation due to the Gaza blockade, barrier wall and movement restrictions had left the population heavily reliant on aid to meet basic needs. In both Gaza and the West Bank, the ability of Palestinians to access lifesaving services has dramatically decreased while protection concerns have exponentially increased.

In Gaza, the Israeli bombardment and ground incursions have exacerbated the humanitarian crisis, resulting in significant civilian casualties, widespread displacement, and the destruction of critical infrastructure. As of 30 June 2024, at least 37,718 Palestinian fatalities and 85,523 injuries had been reported by the Ministry of Health. At the time of writing, evacuation orders issued by the Israeli military covered approximately 85 per cent of Gaza. 1.9 million people, or approximately 90 per cent of the population have been displaced, often many multiple times.

In the West Bank, this period has seen increased settler violence, demolitions and restriction of movement in the West Bank, leading to further displacement, disruption of livelihoods and unsafe living conditions. Between October 7, 2023, and June 30, 2024, the conflict in the West Bank resulted in the deaths of at least 587 Palestinians, including 143 children, who were killed at an average rate of one every two days, according to OCHA and UNICEF.

Over the first half of 2024, humanitarian actors saw their operating space significantly contract. Access and movement restrictions of people and humanitarian cargo in and/or out of Gaza, and within Gaza, remain fundamental impediments to the provision of humanitarian assistance, along with security impediments arising from the ongoing hostilities and breakdown of law and order within Gaza. During this period, 273 humanitarian workers were killed in Gaza, 200 UNRWA staff members.

Gaza remains a war zone with active and ongoing military operations. Evacuation orders are near daily occurrences, resulting in a population that is constantly on the move, which means operations need to also move. Asset losses are high, and the psychological impact is great. Amidst unprecedented challenges, humanitarian actors have continued to operate. To do so has required that they constantly adapt, innovate and identify creative solutions to complex problems on a daily basis.

IV. UNRWA's collapse would deprive an entire generation of Gaza children of education, warns UNRWA Chief

On 6 November, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini delivered the following [statement](#) at the General Assembly.

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I am addressing you at UNRWA's darkest hour.

The Israeli Knesset's legislative action poses an imminent and existential threat to the Agency. It is the latest move in a relentless campaign to delegitimize UNRWA and undermine its role providing development services and emergency assistance to Palestine Refugees.

Since the beginning of the war in Gaza, Israeli officials have described dismantling UNRWA as a war goal. The Knesset legislation serves this objective. However, its intention goes beyond undermining UNRWA and the United Nations.

It seeks to end Palestinians' right to self-determination, and aspiration for a just political solution. It advances efforts to shift, unilaterally, long-established parameters for resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict.

A year of the most intense bombardment of a civilian population since World War II, and the severe restriction of humanitarian aid, have transformed Gaza into a dystopian horror.

More than 43,000 people are reported killed, most of them women and children. Thousands more lie unaccounted for under the rubble. Nearly the entire population is displaced.

Hostages taken from Israel remain in prolonged and terrifying captivity.

In northern Gaza, Palestinians are being burned and buried alive by airstrikes. A brutal siege and attacks on hospitals and rescue teams are denying lifesaving supplies and assistance to the population. Men and boys are being arrested and reportedly detained in undisclosed locations.

The actions of Israeli forces and pervasive insecurity are rendering the humanitarian response untenable.

Meanwhile, the occupied West Bank is gripped by escalating conflict. Settler violence and military incursions are a daily occurrence.

Public infrastructure is destroyed deliberately, inflicting collective punishment on Palestinians. The economy is on the verge of collapse.

Layered onto this unspeakable suffering, is the threat of UNRWA's operations ending.

UNRWA is the mechanism through which this Assembly has tasked the United Nations to assist Palestine Refugees.

Unique among UN agencies, UNRWA is mandated to directly provide public-like services, including education for more than half a million children, primary healthcare and social support.

UNRWA's services primarily concern human development. However, our large footprint and long experience have enabled us to transform rapidly into a humanitarian machine in Gaza. Our teachers became shelter managers overnight. Our health clinics were transformed into emergency rooms. Our health teams were critical to rolling out the emergency polio vaccination campaign.

For the past year, UNRWA has been a lifeline for the people of Gaza.

It is the only pillar of their lives left standing.

The Knesset legislation forbids contact between Israeli state officials and UNRWA representatives. It prohibits UNRWA operations in what it calls "the sovereign territory of the State of Israel". Its implementation will have disastrous consequences.

In Gaza, dismantling UNRWA will collapse the United Nations humanitarian response, which relies heavily on the Agency's infrastructure. Glaringly absent from discussions about Gaza without UNRWA, is education. The Agency has been providing education to generations of Palestine Refugees, many of whom have achieved remarkable success in the region and around the world. Countless alumni have told me about the pivotal role that an UNRWA education has played in their lives.

An education that champions human rights and gender equality; and promotes tolerance and respect for cultural identity. Palestinians value education highly – it is the only asset from which they have not, until now, been dispossessed. In the absence of a capable public administration or state, only UNRWA can deliver education to more than 650,000 girls and boys in Gaza. In the absence of UNRWA, an entire generation will be denied the right to education.

Their future will be sacrificed, sowing the seeds for marginalization and extremism.

In the West Bank, UNRWA's collapse would deprive at least [50,000] children of education, and hundreds of thousands of Palestine Refugees of healthcare. The Agency is the second largest employer after the Palestinian Authority, and represents an estimated five to eight percent of the GDP. Dismantling UNRWA will not terminate the refugee status of Palestinians – this status exists independently of the Agency – but it will severely harm their lives and future.

For decades, UNRWA has provided Palestine Refugees with services ensuring their access to basic rights. Despite this, and perhaps because of it, we have paid a heavy price. The Agency is under intense attack in Gaza. At least 239 UNRWA personnel have been killed. Others have been detained and report being tortured.

More than two-thirds of UNRWA premises have been damaged or destroyed. Palestinian armed groups, including Hamas, and Israeli forces have allegedly used our premises for military purposes. In occupied East Jerusalem, our headquarters was set on fire. Local authorities are attempting to evict us from these premises to build settlements.

I continue to call for accountability for the attacks on UN personnel, premises and operations through an independent investigation into these violations.

UNRWA takes allegations of neutrality breaches extremely seriously. We do not operate in a zero-risk environment, but we take a zero-tolerance approach to any proven breaches. It is problematic, however, that unsubstantiated allegations are used to justify actions against the Agency.

The Independent Review of UNRWA's neutrality found that the Agency has a more robust neutrality framework than comparable entities. We are making every effort to implement the recommendations of the review. I must emphasize that UNRWA – like comparable UN entities – does not have police, military or intelligence capabilities. We rely on Member States when such capacities are needed.

For over 15 years, UNRWA has shared annually the names of its staff with the Government of Israel. We now share these names on a quarterly basis. This includes the names of staff about whom the government never previously raised concerns, but now include in lists alleging armed militancy.

We have repeatedly asked the Government of Israel for evidence, and proposed how sensitive evidence might be shared. No response has been received.

UNRWA is therefore in the invidious position of being unable to address allegations for which it has no evidence, while these allegations continue to be used to undermine the Agency.

Today, millions of Palestine Refugees fear that the public services on which their lives depend will soon disappear. They fear that their children will be deprived of education; that illnesses will go untreated; and that social support will stop.

17,000 UNRWA personnel in the occupied Palestinian territory fear that they will lose their employment.

The entire population of Gaza fears that their only remaining lifeline will be cut.

Without intervention by Member States, UNRWA will collapse, plunging millions of Palestinians into chaos.

I have three urgent requests to prevent this devastating outcome:

First, I ask that Member States act to prevent the implementation of the legislation against UNRWA. Changes to UNRWA's mandate are the prerogative of the General Assembly, not individual Member States.

Second, I ask that Member States ensure that any plan for a political transition delineates UNRWA's role. The Agency must progressively conclude its mandate within the framework of a political solution, and hand over its services to an empowered Palestinian administration.

Finally, I ask that Member States maintain funding to UNRWA, and do not withhold or divert funds on the assumption that the Agency can no longer operate. The cost of providing critical services, including education and healthcare, during a transition will be immense. I must also alert Member States that abruptly dismantling the Agency will cost more than half a billion dollars in staff separation indemnities alone.

The future of Palestine Refugees is a shared responsibility. My staff has given far more than we have any right to expect of them to deliver UNRWA's mandate. They have worked for 13 months without pause, amid immense personal hardship and loss.

Thanks to them, Gaza has survived until now.

Today, I am asking Member States to act in defence of Palestine Refugees and of UNRWA.

To do so is to defend the United Nations, which lies at the heart of our multilateral system.

It is to defend our collective future, which is today in the greatest jeopardy.

V. There must be “due reckoning” for horrific violations, possible atrocity crimes in Gaza – UN Human Rights Chief

On 8 November, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) issued the following [press release](#) concerning the “Six-month update [report](#) on the human rights situation in Gaza: 1 November 2023 to 30 April 2024”.

The UN Human Rights Office today published a [report](#) detailing the horrific reality that has unfolded for the people of Israel and Gaza since 7 October 2023, and said justice must be served with respect to the grave violations of international law that have been committed.

The detailed analysis of violations covers the six-month period from November 2023 to April 2024, and broadly examines the killing of civilians and breaches of international law that in many instances could amount to war crimes. If committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against a civilian population, further to a State or organizational policy, these violations may constitute crimes against humanity, it adds. And if committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, they may also constitute genocide, the report warns.

“The International Court of Justice, in its series of orders on provisional measures, underscored the international obligations of Israel to prevent, protect against and punish acts of genocide and associated prohibited conduct,” it says.

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk stressed the imperative for Israel fully and immediately to comply with those obligations. This is even more critical and urgent, given the totality of conduct set out in the report and taking into account most recent events, including Israel's operations in North Gaza and its adoption of legislation affecting UNRWA's activities, he said.

“It is essential that there is due reckoning with respect to the allegations of serious violations of international law through credible and impartial judicial bodies and that, in the meantime, all relevant information and evidence are collected and preserved,” he said.

Türk recalled States’ obligations to act to prevent atrocity crimes, and urged them to support the work of accountability mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court, in relation to the current conflict; exercise universal jurisdiction to investigate and try crimes under international law in national courts, consistent with international standards; and comply with extradition requests pertaining to suspects of such crimes to countries where they would receive a fair trial.

The report points to repeated statements from Israeli officials positing the end of the conflict as contingent upon Gaza’s entire destruction and the exodus of the Palestinian people. Furthermore, it documents efforts to rationalize discrimination, hostility and violence towards, and even the elimination of, Palestinians.

The report shows how civilians have borne the brunt of the attacks, including through the initial “complete siege” of Gaza by Israeli Forces, as well as the Israel Government’s continuing unlawful failures to allow, facilitate and ensure the entry of humanitarian aid, the destruction of civilian infrastructure, and repeated mass displacement. This conduct by Israeli Forces has caused unprecedented levels of killings, death, injury, starvation, illness and disease, the reports says. Palestinian armed groups have also conducted hostilities in ways that have likely contributed to harm to civilians.

On 7 October 2023, Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups also committed serious violations of international law on a wide scale, the report states, including attacks directed against Israeli and foreign civilians, killing and mistreatment of civilians, sexual violence, destruction of civilian objects, and taking of hostages. These acts could amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, it says. Following 7 October, Hamas and other armed groups also celebrated the attacks of that day, which was deeply troubling and totally unacceptable.

“The rules of war, in force now for 160 years, were designed to limit and prevent human suffering in times of armed conflict,” said Türk. “Their wanton disregard has led to the current extremes of human suffering which we continue to see today. It seems inconceivable that the parties to the conflict refuse to apply universally accepted and binding norms developed to preserve the very bare minimum of humanity.”

The UN Human Rights Office has been verifying the personal details of those killed in Gaza by strikes, shelling and other conduct of hostilities. Of those fatalities, it has so far found close to 70 per cent to be children and women, indicating a systematic violation of the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, including distinction and proportionality.

The continuation of these attacks, killing evenly across the population, “demonstrates an apparent indifference to the death of civilians and the impact of the means and methods of warfare selected”, the report states.

The most represented of verified fatalities are children. The three categories of age most represented were children aged from 5 to 9 years old, children from 10 to 14 years old, and babies and children from 0 to 4 years old.

Of the verified fatalities, about 80 per cent were killed in residential buildings or similar housing, out of which 44 per cent were children and 26 per cent were women.

Monitoring by the UN Human Rights Office indicates that the high number of fatalities per attack was principally due to the Israeli Defense Forces’ use of weapons with wide area effects in densely populated areas, although some of the fatalities may have been the result of errant projectiles from Palestinian armed groups dropping short.

The High Commissioner calls on Member States, consistent with their obligations under international law, to assess arms sales or transfers and provision of military, logistical or financial support to a party to the conflict, with a view to ending such support if this risks serious violations of international law.

The report also raises concerns with respect to forcible transfer, attacks on hospitals, in apparent systematic fashion, and journalists. It also points to the reported use of white phosphorus munitions.

“Our monitoring indicates that this unprecedented level of killing, and injury of civilians is a direct consequence of the failure to comply with fundamental principles of international humanitarian law – namely the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack,” Türk said. “Tragically, these documented patterns of violations continue unabated, over one year after the start of the war.”

“The trends and patterns of violations, and of applicable international law as clarified by the International Court of Justice, must inform the steps to be taken to end the current crisis,” said the High Commissioner. “The violence must stop immediately, the hostages and those arbitrarily detained must be released, and we must focus on flooding Gaza with humanitarian aid.”

VI. Acting Emergency Relief Coordinator Briefs the Security Council on the protection of civilians in Gaza

Below is the [statement](#) of Ms. Joyce Msuya, Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, at the Security Council meeting on 12 November.

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Thank you also to our colleagues from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Food and Agriculture Organization. We unequivocally share the serious concerns they have expressed today.

Since the escalation of this conflict in October 2023, we have briefed this Council on no fewer than 16 occasions.

We have condemned the death, destruction and dehumanization of civilians in Gaza who have been driven from their homes, stripped of their sense of place and dignity, forced to witness their family members killed, burned and buried alive.

Injured children have had the words ‘Wounded Child, No Surviving Family,’ penned on their arms.

Most of Gaza is now a wasteland of rubble. What distinction was made, and what precautions were taken, if more than 70 per cent of civilian housing is either damaged or destroyed?

Essential commercial goods and services including electricity have been all but cut off. This has led to increasing hunger, starvation and now, as we have heard, potentially famine. We are witnessing acts reminiscent of the gravest international crimes.

Mr. President, the latest offensive that Israel started in North Gaza last month is an intensified, extreme and accelerated version of the horrors of the past year.

Shelters, homes and schools have been burned and bombed to the ground.

Numerous families remain trapped under rubble, because fuel for digging equipment is being blocked by the Israeli authorities and first responders have been blocked from reaching them.

Ambulances have been destroyed. And hospitals have come under attack.

Supplies to the north are being cut off and people are being pushed further south.

The daily cruelty we see in Gaza seems to have no limits. Beit Hanoun has been besieged for more than one month. Yesterday, food and water reached shelters, but today, Israeli soldiers forcibly displaced people from those same areas.

People under siege now tell us they are afraid that they will be targeted if they receive help.

As I brief you, Israeli authorities are blocking humanitarian assistance from entering North Gaza, where fighting continues, and around 75,000 people remain with dwindling water and food supplies.

Conditions of life across Gaza are unfit for human survival. Food is insufficient. Shelter items –needed ahead of winter – are in extremely short supply. Violent armed lootings of our convoys have become increasingly organized along routes from Kerem Shalom, driven by the collapse of public order and safety.

Many food assistance kitchens have been forced to close. In October, daily food distribution shrunk by nearly 25 per cent compared to September.

These are not logistical problems – they can be solved with the right political will. The Israeli military's announcement that the Kissufim crossing into central Gaza has opened cannot come soon enough.

However, our capacity to respond is being undermined, including by the Israeli Knesset legislation to ban UNRWA activities starting in January. If implemented, this bill will be another devastating blow to efforts to provide life-saving aid and avert the threat of famine. No other organization can fill these gaps.

Mr. President, we also remain concerned about the deteriorating situation of Palestinians in the West Bank. Israeli forces continue to employ lethal tactics that appear to defy law enforcement standards. And they are causing damage to water and sewage networks, and other infrastructure.

The demolition of Palestinian-owned homes also continues. On 5 November, nine homes were demolished in the Silwan area outside Jerusalem's Old City, displacing 42 people, nearly half of them children, to make way for an illegal settlement-related project.

Israeli settlers continue attacks on Palestinians and their property, with more than 160 incidents related to the olive harvest documented in October alone, the majority resulting in casualties or property damage.

Movement restrictions are making civilian access to essential services, particularly health care, increasingly challenging in refugee camps and in Area C, where humanitarian partners are scaling up to support communities in meeting needs.

Mr. President, the most basic requirements of humanity are being disregarded.

These are requirements that Members of this Council, and indeed all Member States, set out in international humanitarian and human rights law. They must be respected.

Constant care must be taken to spare civilians throughout military operations.

Civilians must be allowed to seek protection elsewhere, and they must be guaranteed the right to voluntarily return, as international law demands. Reports indicating that people would not be allowed to return should be of grave concern to this Council.

Parties must ensure that civilians' essential needs are met and must facilitate unimpeded humanitarian access to those in need, wherever they are.

Hostages and those arbitrarily detained must be released immediately, and in the interim, they must be treated humanely and allowed visits by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Indiscriminate rocket fire towards Israel must stop. There must be accountability for international crimes. The provisional orders of the International Court of Justice in the case on the application of the Genocide Convention in the Gaza Strip and the determinations in its Advisory Opinion of July 2024 must be implemented now.

Mr. President, now is the time for Member States to use their leverage to prevent and stop violations of international humanitarian law – through diplomatic and economic pressure, responsible arms transfers and combating impunity.

Now is the time for the Security Council to use its powers under the UN Charter to ensure compliance with international law and full implementation of its resolutions.

VII. UN Special Committee finds Israel's warfare methods in Gaza consistent with genocide, including starvation as a weapon of war

On 14 November, the United Nations Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories issued the following [press release](#).

Israel's warfare in Gaza is consistent with the characteristics of genocide, with mass civilian casualties and life-threatening conditions intentionally imposed on Palestinians there, the UN Special Committee to investigate Israeli practices said in a new [report](#) released today.

"Since the beginning of the war, Israeli officials have publicly supported policies that strip Palestinians of the very necessities required to sustain life — food, water, and fuel," the Committee said. "These statements along with the systematic and unlawful interference of humanitarian aid make clear Israel's intent to instrumentalise life-saving supplies for political and military gains."

Covering the period from October 2023 to July 2024, the report examines developments across the occupied Palestinian territory and the occupied Syrian Golan but focuses on the catastrophic impact of the current war in Gaza on the rights of Palestinians.

"Through its siege over Gaza, obstruction of humanitarian aid, alongside targeted attacks and killing of civilians and aid workers, despite repeated UN appeals, binding orders from the International Court of Justice and resolutions of the Security Council, Israel is intentionally causing death, starvation and serious injury, using starvation as a method of war and inflicting collective punishment on the Palestinian population," the Committee said.

The report documents how Israel's extensive bombing campaign in Gaza has decimated essential services and unleashed an environmental catastrophe that will have lasting health impacts. By early 2024, over 25,000 tons of explosives—equivalent to two nuclear bombs—had been dropped on Gaza, causing massive destruction and the collapse of water and sanitation systems, agricultural devastation, and toxic pollution.

"By destroying vital water, sanitation and food systems, and contaminating the environment, Israel has created a lethal mix of crises that will inflict severe harm on generations to come," the Committee said.

The report raises serious concerns about Israel's use of AI-enhanced targeting systems in directing its military operations, and the impact it has had on civilians, particularly evident in the overwhelming number of women and children among the casualties.

"The Israeli military's use of AI-assisted targeting, with minimal human oversight, combined with heavy bombs, underscores Israel's disregard of its obligation to distinguish between civilians and combatants and take adequate safeguards to prevent civilian deaths," the Committee said.

Amid the devastation in Gaza, Israel's escalating media censorship, suppression of dissent, and targeting of journalists are deliberate efforts to block global access to information, the Committee found. It also noted how social media companies disproportionately removed "pro-Palestinian content" in comparison with posts inciting violence against Palestinians.

The Committee condemned the ongoing smear campaign and other attacks against UNRWA and the UN at large.

"This deliberate silencing of reporting, combined with disinformation and attacks on humanitarian workers, is a clear strategy to undermine the vital work of the UN, sever the lifeline of aid still reaching Gaza, and dismantle the international legal order," the Committee said.

The Committee called on all Member States to uphold their legal obligations to prevent and stop Israel's violations of international law and hold it accountable.

"It is the collective responsibility of every State to stop supporting the assault on Gaza and the apartheid system in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem," the Committee said.

"Upholding international law and ensuring accountability for violations rests squarely on Member States. A failure to do so weakens the very core of the international legal system and sets a dangerous precedent, allowing atrocities to go unchecked."

The Committee's report will be presented to the 79th Session of the UN General Assembly on 18 November 2024.

VIII. UN Special Coordinator briefs Security Council Ministerial meeting

The following [statement](#) was delivered by Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, on 18 November at the Security Council meeting on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

/...

After over a year of horrific war and bloodshed, the region is at a grim crossroads.

The war between Hamas and Israel has spread to the region –involving non-state armed groups and now engulfing large swaths of Lebanon in a war between Hizbullah and Israel, amidst repeated escalatory exchanges between Israel and Iran.

As feared, a year of armed exchanges across the Blue Line between Israel and Hezbollah has erupted into an all-out war.

Daily barrages of rocket fire from Lebanon towards northern and central Israel, massive Israeli airstrikes across Lebanon and an Israeli ground operation in southern Lebanon have led to alarmingly high numbers of casualties and massive destruction.

Armed groups operating from Yemen, Iraq and Syria have also continued to launch missiles and projectiles toward Israel, while Israel continues to strike in Yemen and Syria. Israel and Iran have also engaged in overt and direct military confrontations, with Iran launching hundreds of drones and ballistic missiles at Israel, and Israel conducting extensive airstrikes on Iran.

We are living a nightmare. The trauma and grief that has been unleashed is immeasurable. Hamas's appalling terrorist attacks inside Israel on 7 October 2023 and Palestinian armed group's killing and continued holding of hostages in unbearable conditions has devastated Israel. Grinding warfare and Israel's devastating military campaign in Gaza has wrought mass destruction and enormous casualties. Most of the Palestinian population in Gaza has been displaced and whole areas of the Strip are being emptied and made uninhabitable.

These events will reverberate for generations and shape the region in ways we cannot yet fully comprehend.

Madam President, as this Council has been briefed repeatedly,

The humanitarian situation in Gaza, as winter begins, is catastrophic, particularly developments in the north of Gaza with a large-scale and near-total displacement of the population and widespread destruction and clearing of land, amidst what looks like a disturbing disregard for international humanitarian law.

The United Nations and its partners are working around the clock to bring assistance to the population in Gaza. But humanitarian agencies continue to face an incredible challenge and dangerous operational environment, as well as access restrictions that seriously hinder their vital work. Attacks on humanitarians and looting of aid – including by organized armed Palestinians – remains a serious and unaddressed obstacle, as was proven to be so on Saturday.

The current conditions are among the worst we've seen during the entire war and are not set to improve.

The occupied West Bank remains stuck in a destructive spiral of violence and hopelessness.

Israeli military operations in Palestinian cities and refugee camps in Area A continue, often leading to armed exchanges with Palestinian militants, while Palestinian attacks against Israelis and high levels of settler-related violence also persist. In all of this – civilians continue to pay the price, very often and increasingly with their lives.

At the same time, settlement expansion continues unabated, as the Israeli Government has taken numerous steps to accelerate settlement advancement, with some ministers now openly calling for formal annexation of the West Bank in the coming months and establishing settlements inside Gaza. This comes in the wake of significant steps in recent months to reshape Israeli control in the West Bank, including not only settlement enlargement, but large-scale state land declarations and the appointment of a civilian deputy in the Civil Administration, thus deepening the illegal occupation.

These dynamics exact a political toll, further undermining the Palestinian Authority, which continues to face an ongoing fiscal and institutional crisis.

All told and combined with developments in Gaza and Israel's recent passage of laws against UNRWA's operations, I must issue an urgent warning that the very institutional framework of support to the Palestinian people and a viable Palestinian state are on the brink of dissolution, threatening to plunge the Occupied Palestinian Territory into even greater chaos.

How much more misery can ordinary people on both sides be expected to endure? What greater burden can we place on humanitarians to deliver? How much further can we bend the system of international laws and institutions meant to protect innocent civilians? How many times can we test the limits of restraint? How deeply can we allow Palestinian institutions to be undermined, threatening the very arrangements meant to ensure a peaceful settlement to this conflict?

Frankly, I don't have the answers, but I can tell you that what we are living now is the result of us testing all these breaking points for way too long.

The steps being taken on the ground in Gaza and the occupied West Bank that I have outlined – not only today but over many briefings in this Council – are taking us further away from the peace process and ultimately a viable Palestinian state.

Armed resistance and military solutions will ultimately fail to provide safety or security for anyone. We need to see greater security for Israel and Palestinians' realization of their right to self-determination.

Although preparations for recovery and reconstruction are well underway, humanitarian relief and reconstruction can be no more than band aids absent a political solution.

If the parties cannot find a path out of the perpetual warfare, then the international community must define the path forward.

The international community must act now – together with the parties – to change the dangerous course we are on.

Here is what we need: we need an immediate ceasefire and release of hostages in Gaza.

We need the ongoing and concerted diplomatic effort to deescalate tensions around the region, including a ceasefire in Lebanon anchored in the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701.

And we need to see implementation of concrete, irreversible steps towards a political framework that resolves the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, ends the occupation, and achieves a two-State solution.

The international community must put down clear markers on how to end the war in Gaza in a way that lays the groundwork for a viable and sustainable political future.

I have mentioned some of these principles in my recent briefings to the Council. I choose to reiterate them here today because they need urgent safeguarding and attention.

- Gaza is and must remain an integral part of a future Palestinian State – with no reductions in its territory. The repeated displacement of the Gaza population must cease, and people must be allowed to return to their homes.
- There should be no long-term Israeli military presence in Gaza, while at the same time Israel's legitimate security concerns, particularly in the wake of the acts of terror committed on 7 October, must be addressed. Calls for the reestablishment of Israeli settlements in Gaza must be firmly rejected and clearly opposed.
- Gaza and the West Bank must be unified politically, economically, and administratively. They must be governed by a Palestinian Government that is recognized and supported by the Palestinian people and the international community.
- There can be no long-term solution in Gaza that is not fundamentally political.

Supporting and sustaining a meaningful political process that can effectively address these issues will require an international community that is engaged and coordinated.

There must be a context in which the international community can muster the tools and a timeline for how this conflict should end, rooted in well-recognized principles, with the capacity to leverage the strengths, resources and influence of the region and international partners with the two parties.

We are again in need today of such a political framework, that will allow for a streamlined collective response to the acute recovery and reconstruction needs in Gaza, while ensuring these needs are addressed within the context of a political process that tangibly advances us towards a two-State solution and a lasting peace.

The UN remains fully committed to participate in and cooperate with such an effort, and to do its part to ensure that this awful war not only ends soon, but concludes in a way that ensures a better future for Palestinians, Israelis, and all in the region.

IX. Security Council fails to adopt a resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, as the United States casts veto

The following is the [text](#) of the draft resolution tabled by the 10 elected Members of the Security Council on 20 November.

Algeria, Ecuador, Guyana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia and Switzerland: draft resolution

The Security Council,

Reaffirming the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and *recalling* all of its relevant resolutions on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, including resolutions [2712](#), [2720 \(2023\)](#), [2728](#) and [2735 \(2024\)](#),

Reaffirming that all parties to conflicts must comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and, as applicable, human rights law, and underscoring the importance of holding accountable those responsible for all violations of international law,

Deploring all attacks against civilians and civilian objects, as well as all violence and hostilities against civilians, and all acts of terrorism, *recalling* its rejection of any forced displacement of the civilian population, including children, in violation of international law including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and *recalling* that the taking of hostages, is prohibited under international law,

Underscoring that respect for the International Court of Justice and its functions, including but not limited to the exercise of its advisory jurisdiction, is essential to international law and justice and to an international order based on the rule of law,

Expressing its deep alarm over the ongoing catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza, including the lack of adequate healthcare services and the state of food insecurity creating a risk of famine notably in the north, and its grave impact on children, women and other civilians,

Commending the ongoing efforts of the United Nations under the leadership of its Secretary-General, and regional and international actors, toward de-escalation and to secure the release of the hostages and address the humanitarian crisis, *emphasizing* the importance of all parties facilitating the provision of humanitarian assistance by UN agencies and other humanitarian actors, further *emphasizing* that actions obstructing the operations of these actors may contravene the UN Charter and undermine international peace and security efforts, *expressing* deep alarm at the number of humanitarian workers killed in Gaza, and recalling its demand in resolutions [2712 \(2023\)](#), [2720 \(2023\)](#), and [2728\(2024\)](#) that all parties to the conflict comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, including with regard to humanitarian access, the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and their freedom of movement,

Reiterating its unwavering commitment to the vision of the two-State solution, with the Gaza Strip as part of the Palestinian State, and where two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders, consistent with international law and relevant UN resolutions, and in this regard stresses the importance of unifying the Gaza Strip with the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority,

1. *Recalls* the Security Council's primary responsibility to uphold international peace and security and demands an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire to be respected by all parties; and further reiterates its demand for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages;
2. *Reiterates* its demand that the parties comply with their obligations under international law in relation to persons they detain;
3. *Demands* immediate access by the civilian population in the Gaza Strip to basic services and humanitarian assistance indispensable to its survival, while rejecting any effort to starve Palestinians, and further demands the facilitation of full, rapid, safe and unhindered entry of humanitarian assistance at scale to and throughout the Gaza Strip and its delivery to all Palestinian civilians who need it, including to civilians in besieged north Gaza, who are in urgent need of immediate humanitarian relief, under the coordination of the United Nations;
4. *Calls on* all parties to fully comply with international law, including international humanitarian law, notably with regard to the protection of civilians, especially women and children, and persons *hors de combat* as well as with regard to the protection of civilian objects;
5. *Demands* that the parties fully, unconditionally, and without delay implement all the provisions of Security Council resolution [2735 \(2024\)](#), leading to, inter alia, the release of hostages, the exchange of Palestinian prisoners, the return of the remains of hostages who have been killed, the return of Palestinian civilians to their homes and neighbourhoods in all areas of Gaza, including in the north, and a full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza;
6. *Underscores* that UNRWA remains the backbone of the humanitarian response in Gaza, calls on all parties to enable the Agency to carry out its mandate as adopted by the General Assembly, in all areas of operation, with full respect for the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence, and to respect international humanitarian law, including the protection of UN and humanitarian facilities, and welcomes the Secretary-General's and UNRWA's commitment to fully implement the recommendations of the Independent Review of Mechanisms and Procedures to Ensure Adherence by UNRWA to the Humanitarian Principle of Neutrality;
7. *Requests* a written assessment from the Secretary-General on the implementation of this resolution within three (3) weeks of its adoption;
8. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive written report to the Security Council within 90 days of the adoption of this resolution which should include a needs assessment for Gaza in the short, medium and long-term, an elaboration of the humanitarian, social and economic consequences of the conflict in Gaza, and an overview of the work of different parts of the UN system relevant to Gaza along with recommendations on how to strengthen coordination across these parts;
9. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

X. Insecurity could bring the humanitarian operation in Gaza to a standstill, warns UN Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory

On 21 November, Muhannad Hadi, UN Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, issued the following [statement](#).

The delivery of critical aid across Gaza, including food, water, fuel and medical supplies, is grinding to a halt. The survival of two million people hangs in the balance. Bakeries are closing one after the other for lack of flour or fuel to operate power generators.

For over six weeks, the Israeli authorities have been banning commercial imports. At the same time, a surge in armed looting targeting humanitarian convoys and truck drivers, fueled by the breakdown in public order and safety, has further crippled our ability to collect supplies from border areas and deliver critical aid.

Palestinian civilians are struggling to survive under unlivable conditions, amid relentless hostilities. Pushed to the brink, they lack access to essential support they desperately need to endure this unparalleled humanitarian catastrophe.

In 2024, UN trucks have been looted 75 times – including 15 such attacks since 4 November alone – and armed people have broken into UN facilities on 34 occasions. Just last week, one driver was shot in the head and hospitalized, along with another truck driver. This Saturday, no less than 98 trucks were looted in a single attack with trucks being damaged or stolen. Humanitarian agencies remain committed to staying and delivering, but our ability to do so is increasingly being called into question.

Conditions for safe and unimpeded humanitarian access across Gaza must be established through lawful means. Our calls on behalf of the affected civilian population can no longer be ignored.

The atrocities must end.

XI. 3 UN human rights experts call for urgent medical evacuation of critically injured journalist from Gaza

On 25 November, Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, and Tlaleng Mofokeng, Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, issued the following [press release](#).

UN experts today called on the Israeli authorities to facilitate without further delay the medical evacuation of *Al Jazeera* journalist Fadi Al-Wahidi, who was critically injured while covering the conflict in Gaza.

“Al-Wahidi has the right to receive urgent medical care and Israel has an obligation under international law to facilitate that right, but despite his life-threatening medical condition, the lack of medical facilities in Gaza, and urgent and repeated appeals from his doctors, his family and various press and journalists’ organisations, Israeli authorities continue to refuse to allow his evacuation,” said the experts.

Al-Wahidi was shot in the neck while reporting from Jabalia refugee camp on 9 October 2024, resulting in paralysis and severe neurological and respiratory injuries. Due to the collapse of medical facilities in Gaza and the ongoing military assault, he is unable to receive the medical care he needs there.

After repeated requests, another *Al Jazeera* cameraman, Ali Al-Attar, who was severely injured in an Israeli airstrike while reporting in Deir al-Balah on 7 October 2024, was finally allowed by the Israeli authorities to be evacuated to Jordan on 20 November 2024.

“We welcome the evacuation of Al-Attar and call on Israel to also agree to Al-Wahidi’s evacuation,” said the experts.

“It has not been lost on us that both Al-Wahidi and Al-Attar are employed by *Al Jazeera*, and we want to express our serious concern at Israel’s unrelenting campaign against *Al Jazeera*, including the banning of the outlet, the raid on its office in Ramallah, targeted killing of its journalists and media workers and smear campaigns to discredit and endanger them,” said the experts.

The experts note that since 7 October 2023, 182 Palestinian journalists and media workers have been killed in Israeli strikes, 17 of whom are women, while two remain missing.

“The killing of Palestinian journalists, their persistent arbitrary arrest and detentions, the continued ban on independent media access into Gaza, persistent internet shutdowns, the destruction of media outlets, and displacement of the Gaza media community, have severely restricted reporting on the war and hampered documentation.

“The denial of medical evacuation or delays in approving requests seem to be part of the overall pattern of persecution, threats and attacks by Israel on journalists in the occupied Palestinian territory in blatant defiance of its international obligations. We condemn it wholeheartedly. Access to medical care must not become a weapon to intimidate and silence journalists or anyone that sheds light on the situation in Gaza,” the experts said.

“States that pride themselves as champions of media freedom must not remain silent. They should use all means of influence at their disposal to ensure that Israel cease such practices and respect the basic humanitarian norms, pending the complete cessation of hostilities in Gaza and beyond.

“The immediate evacuation of Fadi Al-Wahidi is a humanitarian imperative and an international obligation; we urge Israel to facilitate his evacuation immediately without further delay,” the experts said.

They have raised this case with the Israeli Government.

XII. ‘ICC arrest warrants can help save lives, must be respected and complied with’: 34 UN human rights experts

On 26 November, United Nations human rights experts issued the following [press release](#).

UN human rights’ experts today urged full compliance with the International Criminal Court’s (ICC) arrest warrants issued against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, and against Hamas commander Mohammed Diab Ibrahim Al-Masri (Deif) for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

“The ICC’s decision marks a historic step towards justice and accountability, offering hope for ending decades of impunity for long-standing serious violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT),” the experts said. “The protracted lack of accountability, especially of the State of Israel, has been an enabling factor to the increasing and untenable violence in the region, affecting the lives and futures of both Palestinians and Israelis.”

Since 7 October 2023, and the military assault on Gaza and the rest of the OPT, the independent experts have received and documented evidence of grave violations of international law committed against civilian populations. “These violations, often amounting to international crimes, must stop immediately and cannot go unpunished,” they said.

In welcoming the ICC’s decision, the experts reminded States of their legal and moral obligation to uphold international law and punish war criminals, stating that the power to enforce these arrest warrants rests with governments. “Compliance with the arrest warrants is critical to overcome long-standing impunity, benefiting perpetrators, and to end grave crimes in the OPT and Israel,” they said.

As millions of people in the region, especially those in Gaza, continue to endure abhorrent atrocities, it is incumbent on all States to demonstrate their commitment to justice and upholding international law universally, without bias or double standards, the experts said. “Delivering justice is often the outcome of a collective endeavour, we therefore encourage domestic courts to contribute to and complement the critical work done by the ICC.

“We are particularly attentive to the fundamental right of victims and their families to comprehensive and meaningful reparations and urge all relevant parties to ensure their rights are upheld,” the experts said. “In order to guarantee the rights of victims and their families, it is imperative that the ICC be able to carry out their work without interference or other undue pressure.”

XIII. UN Palestinian Rights Committee commemorates the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

Below is the [message](#) by UN Secretary-General António Guterres delivered during the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 26 November.

Every year on this day, the international community stands in solidarity for the dignity, rights, justice and self-determination of the Palestinian people. This year's commemoration is especially painful as those fundamental goals are as distant as they have ever been.

Nothing justifies the 7 October terror attacks by Hamas and the taking of hostages. And nothing justifies the collective punishment of the Palestinian people.

Yet, more than a year later, Gaza is in ruins, more than 43,000 Palestinians – mostly women and children – have been reportedly killed, and the humanitarian crisis is getting worse by the day. This is appalling and inexcusable.

Meanwhile, in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Israeli military operations, settlement expansion, evictions, demolitions, settler violence and threats of annexation are inflicting further pain and injustice.

It is past time for an immediate ceasefire and the unconditional release of all hostages; an end to the unlawful occupation of the Palestinian Territory – as confirmed by the International Court of Justice and the General Assembly; and irreversible progress towards a two-State solution, in line with international law and relevant UN resolutions – with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security, and Jerusalem as the capital of both States.

As a matter of urgency, I appeal for full support of lifesaving humanitarian relief for the Palestinian people – in particular through the work of UNRWA, which represents an irreplaceable lifeline for millions of Palestinians.

The United Nations will continue to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people and their inalienable rights to live in peace, security and dignity.