

Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

17 December 2024

English only

2024 Meeting
Geneva, 16 December 2024

Working paper*

Submitted by the State of Palestine

1. The ongoing unlawful Israeli occupation of the Palestinian people, not only violates their fundamental rights but also undermines international agreements, including the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).
2. Over 14 months have passed since Israel, the illegal occupying Power, launched its genocidal aggression against the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian people face an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe. Over 85,000 tonnes of bombs have been dropped on Gaza, combined with a suffocating siege, starvation, and denial of access to medical assistance. The occupying Power has deliberately attacked healthcare facilities, leaving only 15 of 35 hospitals poorly operational. Its refusal to allow humanitarian aid and attacks on medical personnel have increased the risk of infectious disease outbreaks.
3. According to WHO, alarming cases of infectious diseases have been reported in shelters, including skin infections, hepatitis A, and potential cholera outbreaks. Israel's deliberate actions to block the delivery of essential healthcare and vaccinations contribute to the spread of diseases, amounting to an indirect form of biological warfare against the besieged Palestinian population.
4. Gaza's water systems are destroyed, sewage floods the streets, and solid waste accumulates without proper disposal, exposing the Palestinian people to waterborne diseases and dehydration. Starved and thirsted Palestinians in illegally besieged northern Gaza areas like Jabalia and Beit Hanoun remain unvaccinated, leaving them vulnerable to polio.
5. This dire situation demonstrates the urgent need for enhanced assistance and response mechanisms to mitigate the humanitarian crisis and biological risks facing Gaza. Israel's barbaric aggression has killed more than 45,000 Palestinians and injured over 104,300, two-thirds of whom are women and children. Without access to humanitarian aid, essential healthcare, and the vaccination process disrupted, Palestinians face a biological disaster that transcends borders, threatening neighboring regions.
6. In the illegally occupied West Bank, Israel's disregard for environmental laws worsens conditions for Palestinians. The disposal of untreated wastewater from illegal settlements destroys crops, contaminated water with high levels of E. coli, and endangers public health. Toxic and medical waste further expose communities to severe health risks, such as kidney failure and waterborne diseases, violating international law and basic environmental protections.
7. All the aforementioned practices hinder Palestine's compliance with the BWC and the implementation of Article X. The resulting harm to Palestinian health and resources poses regional environmental risks, calling for urgent international accountability. Moreover, with Israel remaining a non-party to the Convention, this creates uncertainty regarding the

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



potential existence or production of biological weapons within illegal settlements or areas under its control.

8. The State of Palestine calls upon all State Parties to:

- **Call for an end to the Israeli unlawful occupation and an immediate ceasefire;**
- **Protection of healthcare facilities and humanitarian personnel, and unrestricted access for aid and relief efforts;**
- **Strengthening international mechanisms for assistance, response, and preparedness under the BWC is highly important to addressing such crises and preventing the escalation of biological threats.**

9. The State of Palestine supports all initiatives that strengthen the BWC. Now, more than ever, multilateralism and international cooperation are essential to upholding the Convention and ensuring a safer future for all humanity.
