



# General Assembly Security Council

Distr.: General  
16 December 2024

Original: English

General Assembly  
Tenth emergency special session  
Agenda item 5

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

Security Council  
Seventy-ninth year

## **Identical letters dated 16 December 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**

For 436 days, Israel, the occupying Power, has waged a genocidal war in the occupied Gaza Strip, targeting the civilian population and all that sustains life, including humanitarians who seek to preserve it.

For the fifteenth straight month, the Palestinian people have endured mass killing, mass maiming, mass displacement, mass abduction and imprisonment, mass collective punishment and mass starvation under Israel's medieval siege and relentless attack by its depraved soldiers.

Massacre in Beit Lahiya: 75 people killed, including children and women.

Massacre in Khan Younis: 20 people killed, including women and children.

Massacre in Beit Lahiya: 66 people killed, including children and women.

Massacre in Gaza City: 21 people killed, including women and children.

Massacre in Al Mawasi: 12 people killed, including children and women.

Massacre in Deir al Balah: 34 people killed, including women and children.

Massacre in Nuseirat refugee camp: 36 people killed, including children and women.

Massacre in Al Bureij refugee camp: 11 people killed, including women and children.

Massacres in north, central and south Gaza: 52 people killed, including children and women.

This is the everyday, horrific reality across Gaza, with no end in sight. Civilians, humanitarian workers, doctors, rescue workers and journalists targeted, no one safe from the Israeli onslaught.



Homes, hospitals, refugee camps, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) schools, so-called “safe-zones”, humanitarian convoys, churches and mosques targeted, nowhere safe from Israel’s occupying forces (IOF).

A child killed by an Israeli sniper, a charity chef assassinated by an Israeli drone, a family annihilated by an Israeli missile, an entire residential block decimated by Israeli bombs, no one spared.

Massacres and mass destruction by warplanes, tanks, naval boats, drones and every other form of lethal weaponry. Intentional, systematic attacks against a civilian population, with war crimes, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide committed every single day by Israeli leaders and soldiers. And, still, some countries continue to endlessly supply Israel with weapons, ignoring demands to halt arms transfers, breaching legal, humanitarian and moral obligations and deepening their complicity in this genocide.

The casualty toll in Gaza since October 2023 has long surpassed 150,000 killed and injured. Over 45,000 Palestinians killed, over 106,000 wounded. At least 70 per cent of casualties are women and children.

Since Israel’s siege of north Gaza began this October, at least 3,000 Palestinians have been murdered by the IOF. Every day, mothers and fathers bury their children, orphan children bury their parents, the young bury their families, colleagues bury fellow humanitarians and journalists, and entire families are buried in the rubble of their homes.

An estimated 26,000 of the wounded in Gaza have suffered life-altering injuries and permanent disabilities. Gaza now has the highest number of child amputees per capita in the world. And the population of disabled persons increases by the day, left to bear the trauma and challenges of their disabilities with no access to assistive devices or rehabilitation care and denied medical evacuations by the occupying Power.

But even such appalling figures are an undercount of casualties. Thousands upon thousands of Palestinian civilians remain missing under slabs of concrete and the ruins of their homes, decomposing and denied the dignity of burial, or are buried in mass graves, or hurriedly buried by their families under ongoing attack, or left dying in the streets unable to be recovered under Israeli fire, or abducted and killed by Israeli soldiers without a trace. None of them have been included in official counts of casualties arriving in hospitals. Likewise, many wounded persons are unable to access formal medical care due to the destruction of area hospitals, left only to the care of their fellow citizens with the most primitive means and no official records of their injuries.

In this regard, *The Lancet*, a leading global medical journal publishing research from scientists worldwide, estimated in July 2024 that the actual casualty toll in Gaza most probably exceeded 186,000 people. Months later, this is likely a conservative figure, considering direct casualties from military attacks, as well as indirect casualties resulting from reproductive emergencies and communicable and non-communicable diseases. Malnutrition, respiratory and gastrointestinal infections and other illnesses spread like wildfire due to Israel’s siege on humanitarian access, including food, water and medicines required for survival of the population, and destruction of hospitals and health services, including maternal care, and of sanitation and water networks.

While already a year ago, the international community deemed Gaza a humanitarian catastrophe, it is far beyond just a humanitarian catastrophe now. It is also a human rights catastrophe, health catastrophe, famine catastrophe, housing

catastrophe, sanitation catastrophe, environmental catastrophe and mental health catastrophe. It is a catastrophe for the international legal order. As Secretary-General Guterres has stressed: “The catastrophe in Gaza is nothing short of a complete breakdown of our common humanity.”

The extent of the devastation being meted out by Israel was recently conveyed by the United Nations Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza, Sigrid Kaag. Briefing the Security Council, she stated, inter alia, that “I have visited Gaza over three decades in my life, in different capacities, and nothing prepares you as a fellow human being to the toll, the trauma, the suffering, the loss and the sense of abandonment Palestinian civilians feel... Gaza has been reduced to a landscape of death, destruction, deprivation and disease”.

The depravity of Israel’s onslaught also extends to the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, where occupying forces and their accomplices – settler gangs and militias – carry on with daily attacks, terrorizing the Palestinian civilian population. Between January 2023 and November 2024, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs documented that 986 Palestinians were killed, among them 210 children, and 15,879 persons injured by IOF and settlers. Israel also persists with its mass arrests, imprisoning 12,100 Palestinians, including 440 women and 795 children (figures do not include thousands abducted from Gaza), held captive in deplorable conditions and subjected to beatings, physical and mental abuse, medical negligence and torture, including sexual violence.

Israel also continues its violent, forced displacement of Palestinian civilians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, seizing their land and properties, demolishing homes and enabling and permitting extremist settlers to terrorize civilians, especially Bedouin families, to drive them from their communities. Since October 2023, at least 1,757 Palestinians, including 855 children, have been forcibly displaced as a result of violence, demolitions and evictions particularly targeting Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem.

The methodical forced displacement of the Palestinian people by Israel indisputably constitutes ethnic cleansing. Though it has escalated to its most extreme form in these past 14 months – with 90 per cent of Gaza’s population forcibly displaced amid louder demands by Israeli government ministers to forcibly transfer the Palestinian population and further settle and annex their land – this ethnic cleansing campaign is not new. It is part of a decades-long campaign to dispossess and expel the Palestinian people, pre-Nakba, through the Nakba and across more than 57 years of illegal colonial Israeli occupation and apartheid that has denigrated the Palestinian people and sought to erase their presence on their land.

The absence of accountability – not least the Security Council’s failure to impose a ceasefire in the face of this crisis and to implement its own resolutions to end this illegal occupation – have prolonged this inhumanity, emboldening Israel’s criminal leaders and its depraved, immoral army. They commit atrocities en masse and with repugnant arrogance, believing there will never be consequences for their crimes, totally reliant on the United States veto to keep shielding Israel from accountability and protect its Prime Minister and former Defence Minister from justice, even in the face of the warrants issued by the International Criminal Court for their arrest for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

This gratuitous shielding directly fuels Israeli impunity. Israel does not care about Security Council resolutions, not resolution [2735 \(2024\)](#) for a ceasefire, not resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) for a halt to the settlements and the realization of the two-State solution, not any single resolution in the past 77 years. Israel does not care about the binding provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the genocide case brought by South Africa. Israel does not care that the General

Assembly has yet again demanded a ceasefire – an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire – by its resolution [ES-10/26](#) on 11 December. Israel does not care that dozens of States call for an arms embargo against it.

Israel does not care because it has been led to believe that it is a State above the law, that there will never be a cost for its crimes, that it can forever evade accountability.

Nothing is more revealing of this criminal mindset than Israeli soldiers themselves livestreaming and boasting of their atrocities against Palestinian children, women and men to the world, every day exposing Israel's intent to harm Palestinians and destroy every semblance of life in Gaza. This intent is further revealed in daily, public incitement by Israeli officials, demanding more killing and destruction, explicitly vowing ethnic cleansing, more settlements and annexation, and by the Israeli Prime Minister's defiance of the world's demands for a ceasefire and hostage exchange, defying even the demands of his own people.

Likewise, Israel does not care that the General Assembly has reaffirmed by overwhelming majority its full support for the mandate of UNRWA by the adoption of resolution [ES-10/25](#) on 11 December. Instead, Israel carries on with a dangerous defamation campaign against UNRWA, measures to obstruct UNRWA operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and attacks on UNRWA personnel and premises, because it thinks it can get away with it, trashing the United Nations Charter, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, international humanitarian law and every other tenet of international law with impunity.

Israel does not hide its aim to destroy UNRWA, the backbone of international humanitarian operations in Gaza. Targeting UNRWA and depriving Palestine refugees of this lifeline of support are intrinsically linked to its decades-long campaign of ethnic cleansing and erasure, with Palestine refugees and their right of return directly in its crosshairs. If not halted, Israel's ban on UNRWA will be a death sentence for millions across the region whose survival and future depend on its indispensable assistance ensuring the essentials of life, from schooling to healthcare, to shelter and food, to sanitation and to emergency assistance and protection, pending a just solution for their plight.

Israel must be stopped from destroying all support systems to the Palestinian people. It must be stopped from targeting the humanitarians seeking to help the Palestinian people. The world cannot forget that Israel has already killed 337 humanitarian workers, 254 of them UNRWA staff. It must know that Israel even targeted a man who ran a soup kitchen in north Gaza to feed thousands of hungry people left with no other means of subsistence, killing Mahmoud Almadhoun by quadcopter drone on 30 November, further exposing its plans to destroy every aspect of life in Gaza and eliminate anyone seeking to preserve life.

In this regard, we underscore the recent report by Amnesty International, which found sufficient basis to conclude that Israel has committed and continues to commit genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. The findings mirror the conclusions of numerous other civil society organizations, United Nations Special Rapporteurs and legal and human rights scholars. Amnesty International Secretary-General, Agnès Callamard, has stated that "Israel has treated Palestinians in Gaza as a subhuman group unworthy of human rights and dignity, demonstrating its intent to physically destroy them... this is genocide" and urges immediate action by States to pursue accountability and uphold their obligation to prevent genocide, including by halting arms transfers to Israel.

It is long past time to hold Israel responsible for its war crimes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to bring justice for the victims. Immediate, serious and collective efforts are needed to halt Israel's slaughter and starvation of Palestinian children, women and men in Gaza, to halt the ethnic cleansing of our people, to halt the settlement, colonization and annexation of their land, to halt the discrimination and persecution against our people, and to finally halt Israel's impunity. We thus echo United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator Muhannad Hadi's recent appeal: "Urgent action is needed to end atrocities, address the conflict's root causes and safeguard the lives and dignity of all people in the region."

As a second winter descends on Gaza, bringing with it untold miseries, we appeal again for an immediate ceasefire and protection for the Palestinian civilian population. We appeal for immediate humanitarian assistance for the entirety of the population that is being forcibly starved by the occupying Power and for the 1.9 million people repeatedly and forcibly displaced by Israel's onslaught and "evacuation orders", rendered homeless and forced to live in makeshift tents or overcrowded, unsanitary shelters and hospitals, exposed to the cold, rain and harsh elements, to raw sewage in the streets, forced to endure every indignity with no refuge as Israel's bombs and missiles continue to rain down on them.

We again implore the international community to act to end this torment. The Security Council must uphold its Charter duties, it must respond to the General Assembly's demand for an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire, it must ensure respect for the ICJ provisional measures order, and all relevant resolutions must be implemented forthwith. There can be no more delays, no more equivocation; there can be no justification for genocide. We reiterate our calls upon all parts of the United Nations system and all States and peoples to uphold obligations under international law, including humanitarian law and human rights law, and to act to restore our collective humanity.

Do not let another day of this catastrophic nightmare continue with all its infinite and grave implications for our people and our region. Do not let another year begin with this inhumanity. Stop the massacres. Stop the genocide. End this illegal occupation and apartheid regime. End this epic injustice against the Palestinian people and help them to finally live in freedom, dignity and peace in their homeland, to realize justice, to achieve the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and to open a new chapter in the history of our region and world.

This letter is in follow-up to our 852 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 5 November 2024 ([A/ES-10/1015-S/2024/805](#)) 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 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