



Division for  
Palestinian Rights

COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF  
THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE  
PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

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**Bulletin on action by the United  
Nations and Intergovernmental  
organizations relevant to the  
question of Palestine**

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## *Contents*

I. UN human rights experts horrified at blatant disregard for health rights in Gaza.....	4
II. Israel's attacks have devastating impact on Gaza's hospitals, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights tells Security Council .....	5
III. WFP condemns shooting of a UN convoy in Gaza by Israeli forces .....	7
IV. Humanitarian effort in Gaza faces mounting obstacles, warns UN Relief Chief .....	8
V. There is no realistic alternative to UNRWA, Secretary-General warns General Assembly and Security Council .....	8
VI. Secretary-General welcomes a deal to secure a ceasefire and hostage release in Gaza .....	11
VII. Secretary-General appoints Sigrid Kaag as interim Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process .....	12
VIII. 29 UN human rights experts urge all parties to accept Gaza ceasefire and deliver on justice, humanitarian aid and Palestinian self-determination .....	13
IX. UN and partners ready to use ceasefire to boost aid to Gaza, UN Humanitarian Coordinator for OPT reports .....	14
X. Violence and restrictions intensify in the occupied West Bank coinciding with Gaza ceasefire implementation, warns UN Human Rights Office .....	15
XI. Secretary-General urges parties to 'make good' on Gaza deal, calls for release of all hostages .....	16
XII. 'A generation has been traumatized', says UN Relief Chief, briefing Security Council on children in Gaza .....	17
XIII. Denying Palestinian rights is a death sentence for the people of Gaza, Palestinian Rights Committee warns Security Council .....	20
XIV. Concerns grow at use of unlawful lethal force in Jenin in the occupied West Bank - OHCHR.....	21
XV. Israel orders UNRWA to vacate its premises in occupied East Jerusalem and cease operations .....	22
XVI. Israeli forces attack occupied West Bank as Gaza ceasefire takes hold, warn UN human rights experts .....	23
XVII. FAO: emergency relief should be accompanied by restoration of local food production in Gaza...	24
XVIII. Security Council convenes emergency meeting on UNRWA ban .....	25

XIX. Secretary-General commends the ceasefire efforts in Gaza, calls for comprehensive humanitarian aid and urges Member States to support recovery and reconstruction..... 29

XX. UN Palestinian Rights Committee Bureau condemns Israel's UNRWA ban perpetuating Palestinian suffering in wake of ceasefire ..... 31

*The Bulletin can be found in the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) on the Internet at:*

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## **I. UN human rights experts horrified at blatant disregard for health rights in Gaza**

*On 2 January, Tlaleng Mofokeng, UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, issued the following [statement](#).*

The UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Dr Tlaleng Mofokeng, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Francesca Albanese, today called for an end to blatant disregard of the right to health in Gaza, following last week's raid on Kamal Adwan Hospital and the arbitrary arrest and detention of its director, Dr Hussam Abu Safiya.

"For well over a year into the genocide, Israel's blatant assault on the right to health in Gaza and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory is plumbing new depths of impunity," the experts said.

"We are horrified and concerned by reports from northern Gaza and especially the attack on the healthcare workers including the last remaining of 22 now destroyed hospitals: Kamal Adwan Hospital," the experts said. "We are gravely concerned with the fate of Dr Hussam Abu Safiya, yet another doctor to be harassed, kidnapped and arbitrarily detained by the occupation forces, in his case for defying evacuation orders to leave his patients and colleagues behind. This is part of a pattern by Israel to continuously bombard, destroy and fully annihilate the realisation of the right to health in Gaza."

They noted that before his kidnapping, Dr Abu Safiya's son was killed in front of him, and he was recently injured while on duty as a result of Israel's genocidal acts. However he continued to provide care while the hospital was under continuous bombardment and threat.

More disturbing reports indicate that Israeli forces allegedly conducted extrajudicial executions of some people in the vicinity of the hospital, including a Palestinian man who was reportedly holding a white flag.

More than 1,057 Palestinian health and medical professionals have been killed so far and many have been arbitrarily arrested.

"The heroic actions of Palestinian medical colleagues in Gaza, teach us what it means to have taken the medical oath. They are also a clear signal of a depraved humanity that has allowed a genocide to continue for well over a year," the experts said.

They stressed that medical personnel are civilians serving a critical function at the most critical moment, therefore enjoy special protections under international humanitarian law. They are not legitimate targets for attack, nor can they legitimately be detained for exercising their profession.

"Attacks on healthcare workers, hospitals, and healthcare facilities, including ambulances, contravene the fundamental right of individuals to access essential healthcare services, a matter of acute significance during times of armed conflict," the experts said.

They called on Israeli authorities, as the occupying power, to respect and protect the right to life and the right to health in Gaza and the whole occupied Palestinian Territory, including – pending the end of their presence in the occupied territory – by ensuring unhindered access to necessary healthcare and urgently restoring the continuity of essential health services in Gaza.

"Under occupation, intentional assaults on healthcare facilities have the potential to expose individuals to cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment and may constitute a war crime. In Gaza, this is clearly part of a well-established pattern of genocide, for which Israeli leaders will have to be held accountable," the experts said.

"We urge Israel to end its current assault on Gaza and cease its attacks on healthcare facilities. They must also ensure the immediate release of Dr Hussam Abu Safiya, and all other arbitrarily detained healthcare workers.

May they be the last arbitrarily arrested Palestinians, and may the new year begin under different auspices,” they said.

## **II. Israel’s attacks have devastating impact on Gaza’s hospitals, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights tells Security Council**

*On 3 January, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk delivered the [following briefing](#) to the Security Council on the provision of healthcare in Gaza.*

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A human rights catastrophe continues to unfold in Gaza before the eyes of the world. Israel’s means and methods of warfare have killed tens of thousands of people, inflicted vast displacement, and laid waste to the territory. This has raised utmost concerns about compliance with international law.

A recent report by my Office covering the period between 7 October 2023 and 30 June 2024 documents patterns of attacks on hospitals, starting with Israeli airstrikes, followed by raids by ground troops, the detention of some patients and staff, the forced removal of others, and the withdrawal of troops, leaving the hospital essentially non-functional. The report also details the killings of patients, staff, and other civilians.

Hamas and other armed groups continue to launch sporadic and indiscriminate attacks on Israel, and reportedly to expose civilians and civilian infrastructure, including health facilities, to attack, by operating amongst them, which is totally unacceptable.

The protection of hospitals during warfare is paramount and must be respected by all sides, at all times.

The destruction of hospitals across Gaza goes beyond depriving Palestinians of their right to access adequate healthcare.

Those hospitals provided sanctuary for thousands of people with nowhere else to go.

The destruction wrought by the Israeli military’s attacks last Friday on Kamal Adwan hospital – the last functioning hospital in North Gaza – reflects the patterns of attacks documented in the report. Some staff and patients were forced from the hospital while others, including the General Director, were detained, with many reports of torture and ill-treatment.

The Israeli military announced the next day that its months-long operation in North Gaza was concluded, with the separation of North Gaza from Gaza City. We are now seeing reports that parts of North Gaza are almost completely emptied of Palestinians.

We have repeatedly warned that Israel’s military operations in North Gaza place the entire Palestinian population of the governorate at risk, through death and displacement.

For months, we reported intense bombardment on residential buildings, shelters, and medical facilities, displacement orders, the prevention of the entry of aid, attacks on Palestinians trying to flee, and on their shelters once they reached Middle Gaza.

Across Gaza, Israeli military operations in and around hospitals, and associated combat, have had a terrible impact, precisely at a time of massive demands on healthcare due to the ongoing conflict.

They have been particularly devastating for certain Palestinian civilians. Six babies have reportedly died of hypothermia in the past few days alone.

Women, especially those who are pregnant, have suffered gravely. Many women have given birth with little or no support, increasing risks to both mother and child. My Office has been told that newborns have died as a direct result of this lack of care.

According to the Ministry of Health of the State of Palestine, more than 100,000 Palestinians have been injured in Gaza. Many of these wounded people have died while awaiting treatment, because of lack of access to healthcare.

All this is occurring against the backdrop of increased obstacles placed before the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies in bringing aid, including urgent medical supplies, into Gaza and distributing them across the territory.

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According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, more than 1,050 medical professionals have been killed in Gaza.

It is important to note that medical personnel are civilians who serve a critical function, particularly in wartime. They enjoy special protections under international law.

The recent report by my Office documents at least 136 strikes on at least 27 hospitals and 12 other medical facilities in Gaza, which caused significant death and injury among doctors, nurses, medical staff and other civilians, and damaged or destroyed many of the buildings targeted.

In the exceptional circumstances when medical personnel, ambulances, and hospitals lose their special protection, and are considered military objectives, attacks on them must still comply with the fundamental principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack.

Military operations must always distinguish between military targets and civilians. The use of heavy weapons against hospitals is difficult to reconcile with that principle.

Failure to respect these principles is a breach of international humanitarian law.

Intentionally directing attacks against hospitals and places where the sick and wounded are treated, provided they are not military objectives, is a war crime.

Under certain circumstances, the deliberate destruction of healthcare facilities may amount to a form of collective punishment, which would also constitute a war crime.

If committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack on a civilian population, such acts may also amount to crimes against humanity.

In most instances, Israel alleges that the hospitals were being improperly used for military purposes by Palestinian armed groups. I have, in fact, just received a letter from the Israeli Ambassador, asserting that Kamal Adwan hospital was militarized by Hamas and that Israeli forces took extraordinary measures to protect civilian life while acting on credible intelligence.

Yet Israel has not provided sufficient information to substantiate many of these claims, which are often vague and broad. In some cases, they appear to be contradicted by publicly available information.

If these allegations were verified, this would raise serious concerns that Palestinian armed groups were using the presence of civilians intentionally, to shield themselves from attack, which would also amount to a war crime.

This is why I am calling for independent, thorough and transparent investigations into all Israeli attacks on hospitals, healthcare infrastructure and medical personnel – as well as the alleged misuse of such facilities.

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I once more warn in the strongest terms about the risk of atrocity crimes being committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

I urge all those with influence to take action accordingly and to protect civilians as a matter of absolute priority.

It is essential that there is full accountability for all violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

It is imperative that all parties do everything in their power to stop the fighting in Gaza so that a long-term ceasefire can take hold.

All hostages must be released immediately and unconditionally.

It is imperative that all those arbitrarily detained are released at once.

I call on Israel, as the occupying Power, to ensure and facilitate access to lifesaving humanitarian aid, including adequate healthcare, for the Palestinian population.

I urge Israel to end its continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible, in line with relevant UN resolutions, the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, and wider international law.

And I call for future recovery and reconstruction efforts to prioritise the restoration of the healthcare system in Gaza. Thank you.

### **III. WFP condemns shooting of a UN convoy in Gaza by Israeli forces**

*On 6 January, the World Food Programme issued the following [press release](#).*

The World Food Programme (WFP) strongly condemns the horrifying incident on January 5, when a clearly marked WFP convoy was shot at by Israeli forces near the Wadi Gaza checkpoint, putting the lives of our staff at tremendous risk and leaving the vehicles immobilized.

The convoy, consisting of three vehicles carrying eight staff members, came under hostile fire despite having received all of the necessary clearances from Israeli authorities. At least 16 bullets struck the vehicles.

Thankfully, no staff members were injured in this terrifying encounter.

This unacceptable event is just the latest example of the complex and dangerous working environment that WFP and other agencies are operating in today. Security conditions in Gaza must urgently improve for lifesaving humanitarian assistance to continue.

WFP urges all parties to respect international humanitarian law, protect civilian lives, and allow safe passage for humanitarian aid.

#### **IV. Humanitarian effort in Gaza faces mounting obstacles, warns UN Relief Chief**

*On 6 January, Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, issued the [following statement](#).*

Our humanitarian effort in Gaza, already struggling, faces mounting obstacles.

Just three examples from the last couple of days alone. An Israeli strike seriously injured three people at a known food distribution point where a partner of the World Food Programme was operating. Israeli soldiers fired over 16 bullets at a clearly marked UN convoy at the checkpoint from the south to the north. Armed Palestinian gangs hijacked six fuel tankers entering from the Kerem Shalom crossing, leaving us hardly any fuel for aid operations.

These incidents are part of a dangerous pattern of sabotage and deliberate disruption. On Friday night, Israeli forces increased attacks during the movement of a 74-truck aid convoy. A drone strike hit a vehicle from the local community which was protecting part of the convoy. And just a few days ago, a UN mission out of Jabalya ran into hostile Israeli soldiers who threatened critical patients and arrested four of them.

The reality is that despite our determination to deliver food, water, and medicine to survivors, our efforts to save lives are at breaking point. There is no meaningful civil order. Israeli forces are unable or unwilling to ensure the safety of our convoys. Statements by Israeli authorities vilify our aid workers even as the military attacks them. Community volunteers who accompany our convoys are being targeted. There is now a perception that it is dangerous to protect aid convoys but safe to loot them.

Since the Hamas attacks of 7 October 2023, over 45,000 Palestinians and 1,200 Israelis have been killed. The population of Gaza has endured more than 14 months of displacement, trauma, destruction of schools, hospitals and civilian infrastructure, and starvation.

As in my statement on 19 December, I call on UN Member States to insist that all civilians, and all humanitarian operations, are protected. This should not need to be said.

#### **V. There is no realistic alternative to UNRWA, Secretary-General warns General Assembly and Security Council**

*On 8 January, UN Secretary-General António Guterres addressed the following [identical letters](#) to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council.*

I refer to the identical letters dated 18 December 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council on matters concerning the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) ([A/79/710-S/2024/940](#)).

As far as the obligations of Israel as an occupying Power in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, are concerned, I take note of the statement in the letter of the Permanent Representative to the effect that “the legislation enacted by the Knesset [see [A/79/684-S/2024/892](#) for the full text of the unofficial translation by Israel from Hebrew] does not in any way undermine Israel’s steadfast commitment to international law” and that “Israel is committed to observing all the international legal obligations that are incumbent upon it, including those prescribed by the law of armed conflict”. This statement is consistent with my identical letters to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council dated 9 December 2024 ([A/79/684-S/2024/892](#)), in which I stated that Israel, as the occupying Power in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, is bound by the rules of international humanitarian law concerning occupation, including those contained in the Regulations respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land (“the Hague Regulations”) annexed to the Convention respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land of 18 October 1907 and the Geneva



Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 (“the Fourth Geneva Convention”). In the letter, I highlighted the key obligations of Israel vis-à-vis the Palestinian people and UNRWA in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and recalled that Israel may not invoke the provisions of its internal law, including the legislation mentioned above, as justification for its failure to perform those obligations.

With respect to the part of the letter of the Permanent Representative that refers to the legal status of the Gaza Strip, while the International Court of Justice stated that it was “of the view that the policies and practices contemplated by the request of the General Assembly do not include conduct by Israel in the Gaza Strip in response to the attack carried out against it by Hamas and other armed groups on 7 October 2023” (*Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, Advisory Opinion, 19 July 2024, para. 81), the Court did so in order to clarify that conduct by Israel in the Gaza Strip in response to the attack carried out against it by Hamas and other armed groups on 7 October 2023 was not within the scope of the request for an advisory opinion which the General Assembly made in its resolution [77/247](#) of 30 December 2022. The legal status of the Gaza Strip was addressed by the Court in a subsequent section of its Advisory Opinion. The Court thus concluded that it was “of the view that Israel’s withdrawal from the Gaza Strip has not entirely released it of its obligations under the law of occupation” (para. 94 of the Advisory Opinion). Furthermore, the General Assembly, on 18 September 2024, adopted resolution [ES-10/24](#), in which it referred to “the territory of the Gaza Strip, which constitutes an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory”, and, on 11 December 2024, adopted resolution [ES-10/25](#) in which it referred to “the Occupied Palestinian Territory, namely in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem”. In the light of the above, and as I mentioned in my identical letters dated 9 December 2024, Israel continues to occupy the Gaza Strip and is bound by the rules of international humanitarian law concerning occupation also with regard to the Gaza Strip.

I also take note of the statement in the letter of the Permanent Representative that “Israel has cooperated and coordinated with more than 40 [...] actors [including United Nations agencies] to allow and facilitate the provision of necessary basic services and humanitarian assistance to the civilian population” and that Israel “stands ready to cooperate with international partners for the purpose of allowing and facilitating the continued free passage of humanitarian aid to civilians in Gaza and reiterates that humanitarian needs should be put above political considerations”.

A number of United Nations entities other than UNRWA have been operating and will continue to operate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to the extent possible and consistent with their mandates. However, this cannot replace UNRWA operations because of its unique mandate and the unique role it has played in providing services and assistance to Palestine refugees, including prior to the occupation of the Palestinian territory by Israel in 1967.

In this regard, in my identical letters dated 9 December 2024, I highlighted the scale of activities that UNRWA has been carrying out in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, for millions of Palestine refugees, including an average of over 15,000 medical consultations per day and over 500,000 per month in Gaza despite the ongoing armed conflict in Gaza. However, it is not just the scale of activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory that makes UNRWA unique and irreplaceable.

UNRWA has been carrying out activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory for more than 70 years. Following its establishment by the General Assembly in resolution [302 \(IV\)](#) of 8 December 1949, UNRWA has been providing assistance to Palestine refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 1950 and has thus accumulated unparalleled experience in providing assistance that is tailored to the specific needs of Palestine refugees. UNRWA is able to access Palestine refugees and swiftly provide the assistance they need, due to its personnel and infrastructure already being available across the Occupied Palestinian Territory to carry out its mandate. Its long-established and extensive presence has also enabled it to provide assistance to Palestine refugees as mandated by the Assembly across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in East Jerusalem, in an effective and coordinated manner.

Any cessation of UNRWA activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory would mean not only that millions of Palestine refugees who have been benefiting from UNRWA services and assistance would no longer be

receiving them, but also that the Agency's long-established experience in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, its tailored assistance to Palestine refugees and its unparalleled access to Palestine refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory would be lost. It is in this sense that I say that there is currently no realistic alternative to UNRWA that could adequately provide the services and assistance required by Palestine refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

I recall, in this connection, that the General Assembly, in its resolution [ES-10/25](#), affirmed that no organization could replace or substitute the Agency's capacity and mandate to serve Palestine refugees and civilians in urgent need of life-saving humanitarian assistance.

As I mentioned in my identical letters dated 9 December 2024, in the event that UNRWA is compelled to cease its activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Israel would be left to ensure that the range of services and assistance that UNRWA has been providing are provided in accordance with its obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. While the competent United Nations entities are prepared to provide the necessary services and assistance to the Palestinian people to the extent possible and consistent with their mandates, this must not be viewed as releasing Israel from its obligations under international law vis-à-vis the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

I would also like to take this opportunity to address the reference made in the letter from the Permanent Representative to "the significant national security risks posed by Hamas's pervasive infiltration of UNRWA and the latter's persistent refusal to remedy this intolerable situation". Despite the explanations that I and the UNRWA Commissioner-General have given in the past on this matter, including to the General Assembly, I am concerned by the fact that attempts have continued to be made to disseminate misunderstandings and misrepresentations. I believe that it is in the interest of the United Nations to address these allegations, which continue to be very damaging to the United Nations in general and constitute an obstacle for UNRWA to operate effectively in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. I call on the Government of Israel to refrain from such misrepresentations.

As mentioned above, the General Assembly established UNRWA and, as such, UNRWA has been operating at all times under the supervision of the Assembly. For this purpose, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA regularly provides updates to the Assembly on the mandated activities of UNRWA (see, for example, the latest annual report of the Commissioner-General to the Assembly ([A/79/13](#))), including on the neutrality of UNRWA (*ibid.*, letter of transmittal from the UNRWA Commissioner-General). UNRWA will continue to update the Assembly on this important matter.

I wish to recall that, upon receiving allegations of breaches of UNRWA neutrality, I appointed, on 5 February 2024, an Independent Review Group on UNRWA, which issued its final report on 20 April 2024. The Review Group, *inter alia*, concluded that "UNRWA has established a significant number of mechanisms and procedures to ensure compliance with the humanitarian principles, with emphasis on the principle of neutrality, and that it possesses a more developed approach to neutrality than other similar [United Nations] or [non-governmental organization] entities", while also "identif[ying] several measures to help UNRWA address its neutrality challenges in eight critical areas requiring immediate improvement". I am, alongside UNRWA, committed to fully implementing the review's recommendations, with the support of Member States. In this regard, I welcome resolution [ES-10/25](#) in which the General Assembly recognized the necessity to further strengthen and sustain the Agency's compliance with the recommendations of the Independent Review (Colonna Report) through increased contributions, including from the assessed regular budget of the United Nations. I also welcome the Security Council press statement of 30 October 2024 in which the members of the Council "welcomed the Secretary-General's and the Agency's commitment to fully implement [the] recommendations [of the Independent Review Group] and called for their accelerated implementation, in line with UNRWA's commitment to the principle of neutrality" (SC/15874). UNRWA has immediately begun implementing the recommendations, supported by a high-level action plan that is regularly updated, with progress shared transparently, including on the UNRWA website.

I also wish to recall that UNRWA engages with Israel with regard to allegations raised against UNRWA and its personnel and takes the steps necessary to investigate those allegations in accordance with the Organization's

regulations, rules and policies and in line with the status, privileges and immunities of the United Nations. In this regard, UNRWA has responded to every allegation that has been raised by the Government of Israel against personnel of UNRWA regarding possible political activity that may be against the interest of the United Nations or connections to acts of terror, based on its policy of zero tolerance for activities of this nature. This is demonstrated by the actions taken by UNRWA following allegations that its personnel may have been involved in the attacks of 7 October 2023. Upon receiving the allegations, immediate administrative steps were taken. I immediately referred the allegations to the Office of Internal Oversight Services for investigation under the Organization's regulatory framework. Such actions were consistent with the history of UNRWA engagement with the Government of Israel, whereby it has been responsive to allegations raised by the Government of wrongdoing by UNRWA personnel.

In order for UNRWA to conduct a thorough investigation into the allegations received, there is a need for mutual cooperation between UNRWA and Israel. In this regard, UNRWA has shared with the Government of Israel a list of its personnel and has informed it of suspected military operations in and around UNRWA premises in Gaza. Moreover, UNRWA has repeatedly requested, in its letters to the Government of Israel, that the relevant authorities of Israel share evidence and other information with UNRWA of breaches of UNRWA neutrality in order that it may proceed with disciplinary processes, including dismissal, under its regulatory framework. To date, no response has been received from the Government of Israel to such requests. Furthermore, where requested, UNRWA has been prepared to facilitate the Government's investigation or prosecutorial process against those alleged to have engaged in wrongdoing, in accordance with the legal framework applicable to the Organization. To date, the Government has neither sought UNRWA assistance or cooperation in any investigation or prosecutorial process that it may have conducted, nor provided sufficient evidence to UNRWA to substantiate its allegations against UNRWA personnel.

UNRWA and the Government of Israel have had a cooperative arrangement in the past, and I invite the Government to resume this level of engagement and cooperation. I recall, in this regard, that the General Assembly has, in its resolution [ES-10/25](#), reiterated its demand that Israel comply without delay with all its legal obligations under international law, including, inter alia, to take all necessary and effective measures to ensure, in full cooperation with the United Nations, the unhindered provision at scale by all concerned of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 34, 35, 49 and 72 (b), and of the Security Council.

(Signed) António Guterres

## **VI. Secretary-General welcomes a deal to secure a ceasefire and hostage release in Gaza**

*On 15 January, UN Secretary-General António Guterres issued the following [statement](#).*

I welcome the announcement of a deal to secure a ceasefire and hostage release in Gaza.

I commend the mediators, Egypt, Qatar, and the United States of America, for their dedicated efforts in brokering this deal. Their unwavering commitment to finding a diplomatic solution has been critical in achieving this breakthrough. I call on all relevant parties to uphold their commitments and ensure that this deal is fully implemented.

From the outset of the violence, I have called for an immediate ceasefire and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

Our priority must be to ease the tremendous suffering caused by this conflict. The United Nations stands ready to support the implementation of this deal and scale up the delivery of sustained humanitarian relief to the countless Palestinians who continue to suffer. It is imperative that this ceasefire removes the significant security

and political obstacles to delivering aid across Gaza so that we can support a major increase in urgent lifesaving humanitarian support. The humanitarian situation is at catastrophic levels.

I call on all parties to facilitate the rapid, unhindered, and safe humanitarian relief for all civilians in need. From our side, we will do whatever is humanly possible, aware of the serious challenges and constraints that we will be facing. We expect our efforts to be matched by other humanitarian actors, the private sector and bilateral initiatives.

This deal is a critical first step, but we must mobilize all efforts to also advance broader goals, including the preservation of the unity, contiguity, and integrity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Palestinian unity is essential for achieving lasting peace and stability, and I emphasize that unified Palestinian governance must remain a top priority.

I urge the parties and all relevant partners to seize this opportunity to establish a credible political path to a better future for Palestinians, Israelis, and the broader region. Ending the occupation and achieving a negotiated two-state solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security, in line with international law, relevant UN resolutions, and previous agreements remain an urgent priority. Only through a viable two-state solution can the aspirations of both peoples be fulfilled.

I pay tribute to the civilians who have lost their lives, including UN personnel and humanitarian workers.

The United Nations is steadfast in its commitment to supporting all efforts that promote peace, stability, and a more hopeful future for the people of Palestine and Israel, and across the region.

## **VII. Secretary-General appoints Sigrid Kaag as interim Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process**

*On 16 January, Secretary-General António Guterres addressed the following [letter](#) to the President of the Security Council.*

I have the honour to inform you that I have appointed Sigrid Kaag (Kingdom of the Netherlands) as Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority ad interim, concurrently with her current responsibilities as Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza in accordance with Security Council resolution [2720 \(2023\)](#). Ms. Kaag will assume the responsibilities of Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process ad interim in addition to and concurrently with her mandate as Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza.

Ms. Kaag replaces Tor Wennesland (Norway), who completed his assignment in December 2024. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Mr. Wennesland for his dedication and leadership of the Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority.

I should be grateful if you would bring this matter to the attention of the members of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

*(Signed)* António **Guterres**

### **VIII. 29 UN human rights experts urge all parties to accept Gaza ceasefire and deliver on justice, humanitarian aid and Palestinian self-determination**

*On 17 January, Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967; Astrid Puentes Riaño, Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment; Surya Deva, Special Rapporteur on the right to development; Ben Saul, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism; Margaret Satterthwaite, Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers; Olivier De Schutter; Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights; Ashwini K.P., Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism; Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Tomoya Obokata, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences; Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation; Gina Romero, Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association; Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing; George Katrougalos, Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order; Mary Lawlor, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Heba Hagrass, Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities; Paula Gaviria Betancur, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons; Reem Alsalem, Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences; Farida Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on the right to education; Tlaleng Mofokeng, Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; Siobhán Mullally, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; Genevieve Savigny, Chair of the Working group on peasants and other rural workers; Mama Fatima Singhateh, Special Rapporteur on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children; Elisa Morgera, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change; Mai Sato, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic republic of Iran; and Bina D' Costa, Chair; Barbara G. Reynolds, Catherine S. Namakula and Isabelle Mamadou (Members); Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent issued the following [press release](#).*

UN experts today urged all parties to accept the Gaza ceasefire deal, deliver justice and humanitarian aid, and ensure Palestinian self-determination, expressing hope that a sustainable truce will end immense suffering and loss of life in the besieged and devastated Gaza strip, across the occupied Palestinian territory and in Israel.

“This ceasefire agreement follows 15 months of immense and terrible suffering in Gaza. We are dismayed that shortly after the deal was announced, Israel continued bombing Gaza indiscriminately, killing Palestinian civilians despite expectations of calm until the ceasefire takes effect,” the experts said.

“It is time for all people and illegally detained captives to return home to their loved ones – both the Israeli captives in Gaza and thousands of Palestinians who have been arbitrarily detained and often tortured in Israeli prisons. Nearly 2 million people displaced within Gaza should also be allowed to return home, and be supported to rebuild their lives without fear of further displacement or persecution,” they said.

“We can only hope that this agreement will end the devastating loss of life, stop the genocidal assault and violence that has tormented millions in the occupied Palestinian territory and brought apocalyptic destruction in the Gaza Strip.”

The experts warned that the challenges ahead were monumental, with more than 70 per cent of Gaza’s civilian infrastructure destroyed mainly by the relentless bombing.

“The immediate priority in Gaza is ensuring unfettered humanitarian relief, early recovery and – crucially – reparations to the affected people commensurate with the damage wreaked by Israel since 7 October 2023. The immediate need is for shelter during winter with many children already dead from hypothermia, and food, water and medical and other essential supplies,” the experts said.



“It is essential that Gaza be brought under one legitimate Palestinian Government based on the rights to self-determination of the Palestinian people and full respect of international law. No foreign-imposed control of the strip will be compatible with these rights,” they said.

“The violence, destruction and inhumane suffering that the world has witnessed for over a year is testament to collective political failure and decades of forcibly displacing Palestinian people from their homeland,” the experts said.

“We must continue to uphold international law, especially for survivors that have been affected by the devastation,” they said.

“This must be the opportunity to start resolving the Question of Palestine in line with international law. The occupation that began in 1967 must end and the international community must ensure the independence and full sovereignty of the State of Palestine in line with the 1967 borders,” the experts said. “This will be the first concrete building block for a path to freedom and security for both Palestinians and Israelis.”

They noted that sustainable peace required addressing the conflict’s root causes and driving fundamental change in Gaza and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel.

“The 17-year siege on Gaza must end, and Israel must fully and unconditionally withdraw its presence from the land internationally recognised as the State of Palestine. Peace depends on ending racial segregation and apartheid, as [ordered](#) by the International Court of Justice in July 2024, and ensuring equal rights for all Israelis and Palestinians.

Palestinians displaced since 1948, survivors of the Nakba, must be able to return to their historic lands, rebuild their lives and end the cycle of forced exile,” the experts said.

They also called for all journalists, including the international media, to be granted full, free and safe access to Gaza.

The experts urged Israel, the State of Palestine and other States to investigate and prosecute international crimes under national laws or universal jurisdiction to end impunity in the region.

They called on Israel to cease obstructing investigations by the International Criminal Court, the Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and allow UN Special Procedures to conduct country visits.

“Justice for war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity is owed to the millions directly affected by the brutal violence of the past year,” they said.

“Only the long overdue end to the occupation, apartheid and ensuring justice for atrocities committed will end cycles of violence in the region and underpin a durable peace.”

## **IX. UN and partners ready to use ceasefire to boost aid to Gaza, UN Humanitarian Coordinator for OPT reports**

*On 18 January, the following [statement](#) was issued by Muhannad Hadi, United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory.*

Within the humanitarian system, we have ramped up our readiness ahead of the ceasefire. The United Nations and our partners now stand ready to leverage this opportunity for large-scale relief, as every second counts.

I acknowledge the constructive discussions held with the mediators in Cairo and the agreements reached on implementing humanitarian components of the first phase, including the provision of supplies as essential as water, food, health and shelter to people across Gaza and the long-awaited release of hostages.

I extend my gratitude to the mediators and all parties involved for entrusting the United Nations and our partners with contributing to the delivery of humanitarian assistance outlined in the agreement.

Achieving the targets that have been set will require a collective effort. As the Humanitarian Coordinator, I reaffirm our commitment to successful implementation. We remain equally dedicated to supporting efforts that pave the way for a second phase and a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

I call upon the mediators, the parties involved, our partners, community leaders, and the international community, including donors, to work together for effective and timely implementation, guided by the shared goal of saving lives and addressing people's needs efficiently, meaningfully and in line with humanitarian principles.

#### **X. Violence and restrictions intensify in the occupied West Bank coinciding with Gaza ceasefire implementation, warns UN Human Rights Office**

*On 20 January, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights published the following [press release](#).*

The UN Human Rights Office is alarmed by a wave of renewed violence perpetrated by settlers and Israeli security forces in the Occupied West Bank, coinciding with the implementation of the Gaza ceasefire agreement and the release of hostages and detainees. This has been accompanied by increased restrictions on Palestinians' freedom of movement across the West Bank, including complete closure of some checkpoints and installation of new gates, effectively confining entire communities.

Public statements by Israeli officials warning against celebrations by Palestinian families whose detained loved ones are being released coincided with calls by settlers for gatherings and attacks at locations where detainees are returning. Settler attacks followed, on 19 January, in several towns including Sinjil, Turmus'ayya, and Qalqilya, where scores of settlers torched Palestinians' houses and vehicles, blocked roads, and threw stones. Six Palestinians were injured in Sinjil, including three children, aged between 14 and 16.

Also yesterday, Israeli security forces raided several Palestinian towns in the West Bank. In Sebastia, Nablus, Israeli security forces shot in the chest and killed a 14-year-old Palestinian boy, reportedly unarmed, in the absence of confrontations or clashes. Public statements by Israeli military officials also raise concern about Israel's plans to expand and increase operations in the Occupied West Bank.

Israeli security forces also closed a number of checkpoints in Jericho, set up flying checkpoints in Tulkarm, and further increased searches and controls at checkpoints around Nablus and Tulkarm governorates. They additionally shutdown all entrances to Hebron, which has effectively cut off thousands of Palestinians from neighboring communities and largely prevented children from attending schools, and residents from reaching work. Thirteen new iron gates were reportedly installed at entrances of towns across the Occupied West Bank.

Palestinian security forces detained several Palestinians, including journalists, covering the release of Palestinian detainees.

While the ceasefire takes hold in Gaza, it is important to stress again that international law binds duty-bearers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Israel has the obligation to dismantle settlements and evacuate all settlers from the Occupied West Bank and end its unlawful presence across the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible. In the meantime, Israel has an obligation as the occupying power to ensure the protection of Palestinians from all acts of violence.

Furthermore, Israeli and Palestinian security forces must ensure Palestinians' ability to exercise the full range of their human rights, including freedoms of expression, assembly and movement. They must also ensure their conduct complies with international human rights law, including strict adherence to the rules on the use of force applicable to law enforcement operations. This includes immediately putting an end to the growing practice of unlawful killings of Palestinians both through targeted killings and unnecessary or disproportionate use of force, and conducting thorough, effective and transparent investigations into all possible violations to hold perpetrators accountable.

## **XI. Secretary-General urges parties to 'make good' on Gaza deal, calls for release of all hostages**

*Following are UN Secretary-General António Guterres' [remarks](#) to the Security Council's quarterly open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, in New York on 20 January.*

I thank the presidency of Algeria for convening this briefing. The Middle East is in a period of profound transformation, rife with uncertainty, but also possibility. It is clear the region is being re-shaped. But it is far from clear what will emerge. We have a responsibility to help make sure the people of the Middle East come out of this turbulent period with peace, dignity and a horizon of hope grounded in action.

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In Gaza, at long last, the ceasefire and hostage release deal offer a ray of hope. I commend Egypt, Qatar, and the United States for their steadfast efforts to secure that deal. Yesterday, the first three female hostages were released as part of the first phase. Ninety Palestinian prisoners were also released by Israel.

While many challenges lie ahead, we should appreciate the long-overdue relief this moment provides for Palestinians in Gaza and the hostages reunited with their loved ones. We are doing our part to ensure the rapid scaling up of humanitarian deliveries. More than 630 trucks with humanitarian aid entered Gaza yesterday, at least 300 of them to the north.

I want to repeat: Nothing justifies the appalling 7 October terror attacks by Hamas. And nothing justifies the dramatic levels of death and destruction inflicted on the Palestinian people in Gaza. We have been relentless in calling for an immediate ceasefire. The immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. And immediate action to protect civilians and ensure the delivery of life-saving aid to all those in need.

Now the parties must make good on their commitments and fully implement the deal. I urge the parties to ensure that this deal leads to the release of all hostages and a permanent ceasefire in Gaza.

For our part, the United Nations will do all we can to advance these efforts, in particular, to scale up humanitarian aid across Gaza, fully aware of the significant obstacles, challenges and constraints that we still face. Specifically, the ceasefire must translate into at least four simultaneous actions on the ground:

First, United Nations entities, including the backbone of our humanitarian response, UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East), must be able to perform their functions without hindrance.

The UN must have rapid, safe and unimpeded access through all available channels and crossings to deliver food, water, medicine, fuel, shelter, and materials to repair infrastructure across Gaza, including the north. Other humanitarian organizations, including local and international NGOs, and the private sector must also have unimpeded safe passage. Visas, permits, and other enabling conditions must be in place quickly to allow a surge of desperately needed relief.

Second, scaling up the delivery of aid and essential services demands safe conditions and a conducive operating environment. We require the necessary technical, protective and communications equipment. To do



our work, the parties must coordinate with the UN system in a timely and effective manner. This also includes the restoration of public order and safety to prevent the looting of humanitarian supplies.

Third, people must be able to access life-saving aid. This includes medical evacuations for those who need it, and I urge Member States to take in those patients. Sufficient commercial supplies must also be allowed to enter Gaza to meet the overwhelming needs of the population.

Fourth, and fundamentally, civilians must be protected, and those seeking to return to their communities must have safe passage. Explosive ordnance must be removed. The recovery of human remains must be conducted with dignity and respect.

I urge the Security Council and all Member States to support all efforts to implement this ceasefire, bring about a permanent cessation of hostilities, ensure accountability, and create the conditions for recovery and reconstruction.

The international media must also be allowed into Gaza to report on this crucial story on the ground. We must seize the opportunity presented by the ceasefire deal to intensify efforts toward addressing governance and security frameworks in Gaza.

The Palestinian Authority has said it stands ready to assume its role and responsibilities in Gaza. I urge collective support for the creation of security and governance arrangements that will enable Gaza to be re-unified politically, economically, socially, and administratively with the West Bank.

Regrettably, the situation in the West Bank continues to worsen, with clashes, airstrikes, and unabated illegal settlement expansion and demolitions. I am deeply concerned about an existential threat to the integrity and contiguity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory of Gaza and the West Bank.

Israeli administrative changes over the past two years have streamlined and accelerated the settlement approval process. As a result, control over many aspects of planning and daily life in Area C of the West Bank has been transferred to Israeli civilian authorities. Senior Israeli officials openly speak of formally annexing all or part of the West Bank in the coming months. Any such annexation would constitute a most serious violation of international law.

It is clear that greater stability in the Middle East requires irreversible action towards a two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side-by-side in peace and security, in line with international law, relevant UN resolutions, and previous agreements, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States. The United Nations will continue to support every effort to advance peace, stability and a more hopeful future for Palestinians and Israelis, and the broader region.

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## **XII. ‘A generation has been traumatized’, says UN Relief Chief, briefing Security Council on children in Gaza**

*Following is the [briefing](#) to the Security Council delivered on 23 January by Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.*

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Today marks one of the rare times we are able to highlight positive developments, albeit amid catastrophic humanitarian needs in Gaza.

The ceasefire has provided a vital reprieve from relentless hostilities for Palestinians.

It has at last allowed Israeli hostages and imprisoned Palestinians to be reunited with their families.

And it has enabled a massive surge in life-saving humanitarian aid into Gaza.

We can save more lives if all parties continue to honour the deal.

So I thank the mediators – Egypt, Qatar and the United States – for their tireless efforts to ensure this deal is upheld. I thank them for their help to mitigate operational obstacles as they arise.

Before I update the Council on what humanitarians have achieved during these first few days of the ceasefire, I must testify to what Palestinian children in Gaza have endured in the past 15 months.

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Children have been killed, starved and frozen to death.

They have been maimed, orphaned, separated from their family. Conservative estimates indicate that over 17,000 children are without their families in Gaza.

Some died before their first breath – perishing with their mothers in childbirth. An estimated 150,000 pregnant women and new mothers are in desperate need of health services.

Children have lost their schools and their education. Those with chronic illnesses have struggled to access the care they need, many unable to do so.

Many have faced sexual violence. Girls, who have endured the additional indignity of no menstrual care, have been left exposed and vulnerable.

One million children are in need of mental health and psychosocial support for depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts, according to UNICEF.

A generation has been traumatized.

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Against the backdrop of this horror, the UN and our partners are seizing every opportunity presented by the ceasefire to step up our response across the Strip.

Safe, unobstructed humanitarian access, alongside the absence of hostilities and the almost complete cessation of criminal looting over the past days, have significantly improved our ability to operate.

We have been able to increase the flow of incoming supplies and deliveries, scale up storage capacity and repair work, provide life-saving services, and carry out needs and damage assessments.

We are getting supplies to designated emergency shelters and distribution centres across the Gaza Strip.

We are delivering food parcels and flour and working to reopen bakeries.

We are distributing fuel to ensure that critical services – healthcare, water pumping – can run on back-up generators, in the absence of electricity.

Across the spectrum, humanitarian organizations and agencies have united to meet our humanitarian goals. At the centre of this, as always, is UNRWA.

But we cannot do this alone.

Surging high volumes of aid into Gaza requires a collective effort. All of Gaza – more than 2 million people – depends on our humanitarian support.

So it is critical that the pipelines of stocks are regularly replenished, including by Member States. Aid efforts must urgently be complemented by the private sector.

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While we spare no effort to scale up in Gaza, we must also keep attention on the West Bank.

As we briefed this Council, since October 2023, the West Bank has witnessed record-high levels of casualties, displacement and access restrictions.

These trends have intensified since the announcement of the ceasefire.

Israeli settlers have attacked Palestinian villages, setting homes and properties on fire. Increased movement restrictions are impeding Palestinians' ability to access basic services and livelihoods. Mass detentions are taking place across the West Bank.

Of particular concern is the situation in Jenin, where an Israeli military operation – helicopter gunfire and airstrikes alongside ground forces, has claimed lives and caused further destruction of basic infrastructure and displacement.

This follows the weeks-long operation by the Palestinian Authority, during which access restrictions and confrontations with armed Palestinians triggered displacement of some 2,000 families from the camp and claimed numerous lives.

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After months without hope, we must seize this present moment. So I leave you with three asks:

First, I urge this Council to ensure that the ceasefire is maintained.

Second, I urge this Council to ensure that international law is respected across the Occupied Palestinian Territory of Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Civilians must be protected and their essential needs must be met.

All hostages must be released. Arbitrarily detained Palestinians must be freed. Detainees must be treated humanely and allowed visits by the ICRC.

Civilians must be allowed to return safely to their homes.

They must be able to access life-saving aid. This includes medical evacuations for the wounded and sick who need it. I urge Member States to take in those patients.

We need rapid, unimpeded and safe access for the humanitarian community to be sustained. We can deliver when we are given the chance to do so. UNRWA's role is fundamental and must remain the backbone of these efforts.

Restrictions on critical humanitarian items must be lifted, including items considered to be "dual use." There must be accountability for atrocities, in accordance with international humanitarian law.

And third and finally, Member States must ensure that our humanitarian operations are well-funded. Our 2025 Flash Appeal requires \$4.07 billion to meet the needs of 3 million people in Gaza and the West Bank, with nearly 90 per cent of funds for Gaza.

Funding this appeal is essential to meet massive needs, and to sustain the ceasefire.

Mr. President, the children of Gaza are not collateral damage. They are as deserving as children everywhere of security, education and hope. They tell us that the world was not there for them throughout this war. We must be there for them now. Thank you.

### **XIII. Denying Palestinian rights is a death sentence for the people of Gaza, Palestinian Rights Committee warns Security Council**

*On 24 January, Ambassador Ahmad Faisal Muhamad (Malaysia), Vice-Chair of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People delivered the following [statement](#) during the Security Council quarterly open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.*

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The Committee welcomes the hope that 2025 has brought, including the ceasefire agreement in Gaza between Israel and Hamas on 15 January. We commend Egypt, Qatar, and the United States for their critical role in achieving this agreement, which outlines a phased implementation. This includes what we have all been demanding – the release of hostages, the planned release of Palestinian prisoners, and the entry of much-needed humanitarian aid into Gaza.

While we applaud the ceasefire, it is disheartening that Israeli airstrikes continued even after its announcement, causing additional casualties and undermining the agreement. In just 24 hours after the ceasefire deal was reached, 80 Palestinians, including women and children, were killed. Gaza's death toll now exceeds 47,000, with over 110,000 injured, many permanently, and over 2.1 million people displaced, often repeatedly. Humanitarian aid remains blocked, worsening starvation, disease, and suffering.

We call on Israel to end its attacks, displacement, and violations of international law. The Security Council's division and failure to implement Resolution 2735 are costly and must end. Our inaction undermines our credibility and moral standing.

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The world, and this Council, has grown desensitized to the horrors in Gaza. In the absence of action from the Council, we commend that the General Assembly and Member States have stepped up, demanding a ceasefire, protecting civilians, and pursuing justice. The Committee has amplified these efforts, featuring testimonies from Palestinians, civil society, and experts on the dire realities in Gaza. Committee events such as the 2024 International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and exhibits like "Gaza, Palestine: A Crisis of Humanity and Cry for Justice" at UN Headquarters remind us of the human cost of this conflict.

The ceasefire must be a stepping-stone to lasting peace. Israel's actions in Gaza pose a threat to international peace and security, and are persistent violations of humanitarian and human rights law. We urge the Security Council to ensure that the ceasefire holds, prevent further atrocities, and set a path toward recovery and peace. We call on the Council to play its part in advancing a political horizon for the question of Palestine based on the two States solution and UN resolutions.

We commend the General Assembly's adoption of Resolution ES-10/24, demanding Israel's withdrawal from occupied Palestinian territory (OPT) within a year and urging Member States to cease importing settlement

products and supplying arms used in the OPT. Accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity is critical, and we stress the need for enforcement at national and international levels.

Following Resolution ES-10/25, reaffirming support for UNRWA's mandate, the General Assembly has requested an ICJ advisory opinion on Israel's obligations regarding the presence of UN entities in the OPT. We are confident the ICJ will reaffirm the vital role of UNRWA and other UN bodies. The Security Council must also support these mandates and reject efforts to undermine UNRWA's critical work. Denying Palestinian rights is a death sentence for the people of Gaza.

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Immediate and unhindered humanitarian access is essential. UNRWA's role is indispensable in delivering aid and crucial lifesaving services at the scale required. The ceasefire offers an opportunity to rebuild and heal, but only if the international community provides unwavering support.

The Committee will continue to engage Member States, regional organizations, parliamentarians, civil society, and UN bodies to advocate for Palestinian rights and ensure adherence to the ceasefire agreement and the achievement of just and lasting peace.

We urge all Member States to support the Palestinian Government in leading the recovery process in Gaza. The people urgently need food, shelter, water, healthcare, and a pathway to healing and hope. This is a collective responsibility.

Our efforts continue to be driven by the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and freedom in an independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living in peace with its neighbors. A just resolution for Palestinians remains vital, in line with international law and long standing UN resolutions that demand implementation.

Let us unite in this noble cause for justice, peace, and human dignity. Thank you.

#### **XIV. Concerns grow at use of unlawful lethal force in Jenin in the occupied West Bank - OHCHR**

*On 24 January, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights published the following [press release](#).*

We are deeply concerned by the use of unlawful lethal force in Jenin, in the occupied West Bank. The deadly Israeli operations in recent days raise serious concerns about unnecessary or disproportionate use of force, including methods and means developed for war fighting, in violation of international human rights law, norms and standards applicable to law enforcement operations.

This includes multiple airstrikes and apparently random shooting at unarmed residents attempting to flee or find safety.

Israel, as the occupying power, has the responsibility to protect the population in the territory it occupies. As UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk has stressed, Israel must adopt and enforce rules of engagement that are fully in line with applicable human rights norms and standards.

Our Office has verified that at least 12 Palestinians have been killed and 40 injured by Israeli security forces since Tuesday, most of them reportedly unarmed. Among the injured were a doctor and two nurses, according to the Palestinian Red Crescent.

All killings in a law enforcement context must be thoroughly and independently investigated and those responsible for unlawful killings must be held to account.

By persistently failing, over the years, to hold accountable members of its security forces responsible for unlawful killings, Israel is not only violating its obligations under international law, but risks encouraging the recurrence of such killings.

After weeks of violence by both Israeli and Palestinian security forces in Jenin, over 3,000 families have been reportedly displaced. Essential services such as water and electricity have been interrupted for weeks. The Israeli security forces have also shut down entrances to major Palestinian cities such as Hebron, closed checkpoints, and initiated long, individual searches of vehicles at those that remained open. This has cut off thousands of Palestinians from neighboring communities, and paralysed daily activities. Thirteen new iron gates have reportedly been installed at entrances to other towns across the occupied West Bank.

Following the Gaza ceasefire announcement last week, settlers have been attacking Palestinian villages and stoning vehicles, injuring several Palestinians. Houses and vehicles have been set on fire.

We are also concerned by repeated comments from some Israeli officials about plans to expand settlements further still, in a fresh breach of international law. We recall again that the transfer by Israel of its own civilian population into territories it occupies also amounts to a war crime.

The High Commissioner calls on Israeli authorities to cease all settlement expansion and instead evacuate all settlements, as soon as possible, as required by international law.

We call for an immediate end to the violence in the West Bank. We also call on all parties, including third States with influence, to do everything in their power to ensure peace is achieved in the region.

## **XV. Israel orders UNRWA to vacate its premises in occupied East Jerusalem and cease operations**

*On 26 January, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) issued a [statement](#) which is replicated below.*

The State of Israel ordered UNRWA to vacate all premises in occupied East Jerusalem and cease its operations in them by 30 January 2025.

This order is in contradiction to international law obligations of UN member states including the State of Israel, which is bound by the General Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations.

United Nations premises are inviolable and enjoy privileges and immunities under the United Nations Charter.

The State of Israel is a signatory -without reservations- to the General Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and enacted its provisions in its domestic law. These provisions oblige the State of Israel to respect United Nations privileges and immunities, including respect for United Nations premises.

UNRWA property and assets including in East Jerusalem are immune from search, requisition, confiscation, expropriation, and any other form of interference.

Claims from the Israeli authorities that UNRWA has no right to occupy the premises are without foundation. They promote anti-UNRWA rhetoric, placing the Agency's facilities and personnel at risk. The Government of Israel has stated publicly that the aim to vacate UNRWA premises in Sheikh Jarrah is to expand Israeli illegal settlements in occupied East Jerusalem.

The State of Israel must take all appropriate measures consistent with international law obligations to ensure that UNRWA's property and installations are respected and protected.

## **XVI. Israeli forces attack occupied West Bank as Gaza ceasefire takes hold, warn UN human rights experts**

*On 27 January, Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967; Paula Gaviria Betancur, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons; George Katrougalos, Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order; Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Tlaleng Mofokeng, Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; Gina Romero, Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association; and Reem Alsalem, Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, issued the following [press release](#).*

Israel's intensified military assault against the occupied West Bank marks a dangerous escalation against Palestinians, independent human rights experts\* warned today, urging the international community to take principled action to protect the human rights and dignity of the Palestinian people.

"We are dismayed by the escalation of deadly violence sweeping through Jenin and the rest of the occupied West Bank," the experts said. "Israel's repression seems to have no end in sight."

After weeks of tension and crackdown on the northern West Bank by Palestinian Security forces, the recent scenes of Israeli military and security forces bombing Jenin, destroying vital infrastructure, essential services such as water and electricity, raiding hundreds of homes, preventing the Palestinian Red Crescent medics from reaching injured Palestinians, attacking large crowds of Palestinian residents in the Jenin Refugee Camp and neighbouring cities are only aggravating a deeply unstable situation in the occupied West Bank, the experts said.

"A militarised attack only deepens suffering and violence," they said.

"An alarming number of civilians from the occupied West Bank and especially Jenin refugee camp have already been detained and at least 16 people killed, including a child that was shot in the head, while at least 3,000 families have been displaced. The Israeli Government must instruct its military and security forces to immediately cease any use of excessive force and exercise restraint and withdraw its troops from the occupied West Bank, as ordered by the [International Court of Justice](#) (ICJ) in July 2024."

These acts of aggression are not new for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, the experts noted.

In fact, systematic aerial and ground attacks on Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarem and Tubas governorates, particularly targeting refugee camps, have been a feature of the Israeli assault on the West Bank since 7 October 2023. At the end of August 2024, Israeli occupation forces launched a full-scale military operation against these areas, killing at least 39 Palestinians, including women and children and injuring dozens. In December, at the behest of the Israelis, Palestinian Security Forces attacked Jenin refugee camp, resulting in killings and injuries of Palestinians, including children and one journalist. The Palestinian Security Forces withdrew from Jenin as Israel started their latest attack on the city. "The continuity of the violence against Palestinians in the area speaks for itself," the experts said.

They also noted their concern about the continued detention of journalists by Palestinian and Israeli security forces and the recent banning of the news organisation Al Jazeera in the West Bank by Palestinian authorities, similar to the ban adopted by Israel in May 2024.

The experts were gravely concerned about comments by the Israeli Defence Minister that sought to justify the new onslaught as a response against "Palestinian terrorism." The Minister invoked the concept of "the iron" wall, coined by Jabotinsky, a founder of Zionism, to argue for a crushing, unyielding defence.

"The new attacks come in the wake of a US decision to lift limited sanctions on Israeli settlers, and by Israeli authorities to remove administrative detention and other sanctions for Israeli settler violence, effectively offering a greenlight for more unchecked violence against the Palestinian people," the experts said.



The violence in the occupied West Bank coincides with unprecedented levels of increased colonies' expansion, armed settler violence, displacement, depopulation and land confiscation by the State of Israel including through settler militias. These violations continue even after the ICJ concluded that this occupation is unlawful, and Israel must dismantle it together with the colonies and its associated regime.

"The heightened assault on the occupied West Bank is part of an overall process of Palestinian forced displacement and replacement and the territorial expansion of Israel," the experts said. "This is not an isolated action," they said.

"The long-standing impunity granted to Israel is enabling de-Palestinisation of the occupied territory, leaving Palestinians at the mercy of forces pursuing their elimination as a group," the experts warned.

"The lack of intervention by States to protect Palestinians in line with international law, is alarming and of catastrophic ramifications," the experts said, urging the international community to urgently step in to stop Israel's assault on Palestinians.

"Like other indigenous peoples before them, the Palestinian people seem to have been abandoned to their fate. We cannot let it happen; this would be the greatest failure of the human rights system."

## **XVII. FAO: emergency relief should be accompanied by restoration of local food production in Gaza**

*On 28 January, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization issued the following [press release](#).*

Latest geospatial assessment from FAO and UNOSAT highlights devastating impact of conflict on agrifood systems infrastructure

The ceasefire is the first step in delivering emergency relief and rebuilding local food production in the Gaza Strip, where more than 2 million people urgently need assistance due to the collapse of agricultural output, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

"The ceasefire provides a critical opportunity to address the catastrophic food crisis in Gaza by enabling emergency aid delivery and initiating early recovery efforts. But this is just the beginning of a long journey to recover from the devastation. We will need sustained peace and access to meet the immense needs and ensure no one in Gaza is left behind," said FAO Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol.

Bechdol said FAO is committed to ensuring long-term food security. In the meantime, immediate recovery efforts will prioritize rebuilding agrifood infrastructure, such as greenhouses, wells and solar systems, and scaling up the delivery of critical agricultural inputs to restore local food production.

"These complementary actions to strengthen resilience represent a bridge between short-term activities and longer-term development interventions to help communities rebuild and recover from crises, restore hope, and uphold the Right to Food," Bechdol said.

The 15-month conflict has led to severe food insecurity for the entire population of the Gaza Strip, with communities on the brink of starvation.

The [latest geospatial assessment](#) carried out by FAO and the United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT) between October and December 2024 reveals that the extent of the damage to Gaza's agricultural land has reached unprecedented levels.

According to the assessment, 75 percent of fields once used to grow crops, as well as olive tree orchards, have been damaged or destroyed. Over two-thirds of agricultural wells (1,531 in total) are no longer functional,



crippling irrigation. Livestock losses are at 96 percent, milk production has nearly halted, and only 1 percent of poultry remains alive. The fishing sector is also on the brink of collapse, further worsening food insecurity.

“Agriculture must be at the heart of emergency and recovery efforts,” Bechdol said. “Immediate action must combine emergency relief – food, water, and medical aid – but at the same time, restore local food production. Supporting farmers, herders and fishers now ensures fresh, nutritious food tomorrow,” Bechdol said.

Before the start of the conflict, agriculture accounted for approximately 10 percent of Gaza’s economy, with more than 560,000 people relying entirely or partially on cropping, herding, or fishing for their livelihoods. Gaza’s agriculture and fisheries exports amounted to \$67.3 million in 2022, primarily fresh crops such as strawberries, tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplants, sweet peppers and fresh fish.

According to FAO, rebuilding Gaza’s agricultural sector will be extremely expensive and will take years, if not decades.

In the immediate future, FAO is seeking \$74.5 million to assist 154,100 farmers, herders, and fisher men and women with emergency agricultural inputs and technical support, assuming continued stability provided by the ceasefire and improved access and delivery conditions. Investing in agriculture will restore dignity, ensure nutritious food, and lay the foundation for a resilient, self-reliant agrifood system in Gaza.

Lifting the ban on private imports is also crucial for scaling up humanitarian efforts, reactivating local food production, and ensuring a diversified food supply to complement humanitarian aid. The resumption of commercial imports at scale is indispensable to allow rehabilitation efforts to begin.

#### FAO’s emergency response

To date, FAO has distributed fodder to approximately 4,800 livestock holders from all governorates of the Gaza Strip and veterinary kits to about 2,400 herder families. On 23 January, two trucks carrying a total of 30 tonnes of barley fodder were loaded in Egypt and en route to enter Gaza. A remaining 70 tonnes of barley are prepositioned in Egypt, while around 2,200 tonnes of fodder concentrate are set to enter Gaza via Israel.

FAO is also procuring greenhouse plastic sheets, vaccines, energy blocks, and plastic sheds for animals. These supplies are critical to restore food production, protect animals and restore livelihoods.

In preparation for a smooth transition from emergency to rehabilitation, early recovery and reconstruction, FAO is also prepared to reactivate the field implementation of projects put on hold due to the conflict. This will inject around \$20 million into the local economy to support the rehabilitation efforts of farmers, livestock herders and fisher men and women.

Photos are available [here](#).

### **XVIII. Security Council convenes emergency meeting on UNRWA ban**

*On 28 January, Philippe Lazzarini, Commissioner-General of UNRWA, delivered the following [statement](#) at a Security Council meeting on the Situation in the Middle East including the Palestinian question.*

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Nine days ago, the long-awaited ceasefire in Gaza began. We are heartened by the return of Israeli hostages and imprisoned Palestinians to their families. We are encouraged by marked improvements in the flow of humanitarian aid and in operating conditions. We hope that the ceasefire will hold and that the tremendous suffering in Gaza will subside.

UNRWA is the largest UN presence in Gaza, with 13,000 personnel and 300 premises. The Agency is critical for supporting a shattered population and the ceasefire. And yet, in two days, our operations in the occupied Palestinian territory will be crippled, as legislation passed by the Israeli Knesset takes effect.

At stake is the fate of millions of Palestinians, the ceasefire, and the prospects for a political solution that brings lasting peace and security.

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In the wake of the ceasefire, we must contend with the devastation of the last 15 months, and the enormity of the challenges ahead.

A peer-reviewed study of death by traumatic injury in Gaza reveals that the mortality figure provided by the Ministry of Health is a minimum estimate. 46,000 deaths is likely an undercount by more than 40 percent. The study also confirms that the majority of those killed are women, children and the elderly. Those who escaped death by bombardment, starvation and disease have emerged shell-shocked.

Tens of thousands of people are now returning to the decimated north, to search for the living and to bury the dead. Across the Gaza Strip, Palestinians are turning to UNRWA – the Agency they have known all their lives – for support. Curtailing our operations now – outside a political process, and when trust in the international community is so low – will undermine the ceasefire. It will sabotage Gaza's recovery and political transition.

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Full implementation of the Knesset legislation will be disastrous. In Gaza, undermining UNRWA's operations will compromise the international humanitarian response. It will degrade the capacity of the United Nations just when humanitarian assistance must be scaled up significantly. This will only worsen the already catastrophic living conditions of millions of Palestinians.

The Government of Israel claims that UNRWA's services can be transferred to other entities. In fact, the Agency's mandate to provide public-like services to an entire population is unique. Our capacity to directly provide primary healthcare for millions of Palestinians, and to resume education for hundreds of thousands of children, far exceeds that of any other entity. These services can only be transferred to a functioning state.

The Government of Israel claims that UNRWA plays a negligible role in providing humanitarian assistance in Gaza. In fact, UNRWA constitutes half the emergency response, with all other entities delivering the other half. Since October 2023, we have delivered two-thirds of all food assistance, provided shelter to over a million displaced persons, and vaccinated a quarter of a million children against polio. Since the ceasefire began, UNRWA has brought in 60% of the food entering Gaza, reaching more than half a million people. We conduct some 17,000 medical consultations every day.

Less quantifiable, but critical for the humanitarian response and the ceasefire, is community acceptance. Palestinians know and trust UNRWA. For them, UNRWA is the doctors and nurses providing healthcare; the aid workers distributing food; and the mechanics and engineers building and repairing wells for clean drinking water. The Agency's mere presence brings stability amid profound uncertainty.

In the occupied West Bank, where violence is surging, ending UNRWA's operations will deprive Palestine Refugees of education and healthcare. The Palestinian Authority has made clear that it does not have the financial resources or capacity to compensate for the loss of UNRWA's services.

In occupied East Jerusalem, the Government of Israel has ordered UNRWA to vacate its premises and cease operations by Thursday. This will affect approximately 70,000 patients and more than a thousand students. The deputy mayor has called for a public celebration of UNRWA's expulsion from East Jerusalem opposite the headquarters of our West Bank field office in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. It is on this land that local authorities are planning to build illegal settlements. The relentless assault on UNRWA is harming the lives and

future of Palestinians across the occupied Palestinian territory. It is eroding their trust in the international community, jeopardizing any prospect for peace and security.

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The Knesset legislation defies resolutions of this Council and the General Assembly. It flouts the rulings of the International Court of Justice. It disregards that UNRWA is the mechanism established by the General Assembly to provide assistance to Palestine Refugees, pending a political answer to the question of Palestine.

Implementing the legislation makes a mockery of international law and imposes massive constraints on UNRWA's operations. We are determined, however, to stay and deliver until it is no longer possible to do so. This is not without risk for our Palestinian colleagues, who face an exceptionally hostile operating environment fostered, in part, by a fierce disinformation campaign.

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The Government of Israel is investing significant resources to portray the Agency as a terrorist organisation, and our staff as terrorists or terrorist sympathizers. Billboards and ads accusing UNRWA of terrorism recently appeared in major cities around the world. They were paid for by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Google ad campaigns re-direct those seeking information about the Agency to websites replete with disinformation.

The absurdity of anti-UNRWA propaganda does not diminish the threat it poses to our staff, especially those in the occupied West Bank and in Gaza – where 273 of our colleagues have been killed.

It sets a precedent for governments to accuse a United Nations entity of terrorism as a pretext to clamp down on human rights. It sets a precedent for criminalizing humanitarian assistance and protection. This year, propaganda efforts spearheaded by the Israeli Foreign Ministry received a boost of 150 million dollars.

The political attacks on the Agency are motivated by the desire to strip Palestinians of their refugee status, thereby unilaterally changing the long-established parameters for a political solution. The objective is to deny Palestine Refugees the right to self-determination and erase their history and identity.

Let me be clear, the rights of Palestine Refugees to protection and assistance are not derived from UNRWA's mandate. They exist independently of the Agency. And if UNRWA ceases to protect and assist Palestine Refugees, their rights will not only remain, but there will be much greater emphasis on the right to return or to be resettled, for which UNRWA has no mandate.

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A ceasefire in Gaza must be followed by a political transition that includes an orderly conclusion of UNRWA's mandate, and the handover of its public-like services to empowered and prepared Palestinian institutions.

This is the path now pursued by the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, led by Saudi Arabia, the European Union and the League of Arab States.

Only a political pathway of this nature can ensure the protection and welfare of Palestine Refugees, and peace and security in the region and beyond. A clear choice lies before us:

We can allow UNRWA to implode due to the Knesset legislation and the suspension of funding by key donors. The repercussions of this implosion will not be confined to national borders and will only further destabilize the region.

Alternatively, we can allow the Agency to progressively conclude its mandate within the framework of a political process.

UNRWA was always meant to be temporary. A fair and lasting political solution would allow the Agency to handover its services and workforce to a Palestinian administration. UNRWA has much to offer in support of a political solution.

The Agency is the largest provider of primary healthcare in Gaza, and the second largest in the West Bank. Our health services and expertise are integral to building a strong national health system. UNRWA also has a pivotal role to play in education. In Gaza today, 650,000 girls and boys are living in the rubble, learning nothing more than how to survive. They have already lost more than two years of learning. Absent a full-fledged State, only UNRWA has the capacity to bring these children back to learning. So great is the enthusiasm for resuming learning in Gaza that more than 260,000 children – half of them girls – enrolled in our online learning platform this month.

If we fail to resume education in Gaza, and to preserve it in the occupied West Bank, we will sacrifice an entire generation of Palestinian children.

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The threat posed by political efforts to dismantle UNRWA is compounded by financial challenges, with key donors deciding to end or reduce their contributions to the Agency.

I am appealing for an urgent increase in financial support to UNRWA, the early disbursement of allocated funds, and a review of funding currently on hold.

I also take this opportunity to underscore the Agency's longstanding commitment to neutrality. A detailed presentation at UNRWA's Advisory Commission meeting last November made clear that our High-level Action Plan to implement the recommendations of the Colonna Report is on track. We will also continue to take all necessary steps to investigate credible allegations made against the Agency and its personnel.

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Implementing the Knesset legislation will heighten instability and deepen despair in the occupied Palestinian territory at a critical moment.

I am seeking your decisive intervention in support of peace and stability in the occupied Palestinian territory and the broader region.

First, push back against the implementation of the Knesset legislation. UNRWA's personnel and services are integral to the success of the ceasefire.

Second, insist on a genuine political path forward that delineates UNRWA's role as a provider of education and healthcare. The Agency is essential for ensuring a viable political transition.

Finally, ensure that a financial crisis does not abruptly end UNRWA's lifesaving work. The Agency cannot continue to operate in the face of extraordinary challenges without adequate resources.

In closing, I would like to share with you a message received from a young person in Gaza last week. It is a stark reminder of the heavy responsibility we bear.

"I am writing to you from the rubble of a home that once was a place of warmth and life [...] Now, my days are spent searching for the most [basic] necessities, like flour to feed my family. What truly breaks me is my helplessness in the face of children [...] Their innocent eyes seek safety I cannot provide [and] answers I do not have [...] Around us, the elderly sit in silence, their hearts weighed down by decades of loss and suffering [...] And here I am [...] dying a thousand times every day as I think of all that I cannot do for them."

Unlike the author of this message, we are in a position to do something. It only requires your decisive action and leadership. Thank you.

### **XIX. Secretary-General commends the ceasefire efforts in Gaza, calls for comprehensive humanitarian aid and urges Member States to support recovery and reconstruction**

*On 30 January, the Secretary-General submitted the report [“Demand for ceasefire in Gaza”](#) to the General Assembly, in line with the resolution [ES-10/26](#) adopted on 11 December 2024. The Observations from the report are reproduced below:*

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### **VI. Observations**

28. I welcome the ceasefire and hostage release in Gaza that commenced on 19 January. I commend the mediators, Egypt, Qatar and the United States of America, for their dedicated efforts in brokering the deal and their unwavering commitment to finding a diplomatic solution. It is a critical step towards alleviating the immense civilian suffering. It is vital that it also allows for a significant increase in the entry and delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip at the scale required to meet the overwhelming needs of the population, including the provision of urgently needed supplies that are essential to the survival of the Palestinian civilian population. I urge all parties to fully adhere to the terms of the ceasefire and to act with the utmost restraint to prevent any relapse into violence. This fragile opportunity must lead to a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and the release of all hostages. It must also lead to establishing a political framework that will facilitate a legitimate Palestinian Government that can reunify Gaza and the West Bank.
29. The level of suffering and destruction witnessed in Gaza is unbearable and unprecedented during my term of office as Secretary-General of the United Nations. The United Nations is fully engaged in scaling up the delivery of humanitarian aid to Palestinian civilians in Gaza. Humanitarian and vital commercial supplies must be enabled to enter Gaza in higher volumes, without impediment, and through all available entry points so as to meet the essential needs of civilians, in accordance with international humanitarian law. The resumption of the commercial sector, including the unrestricted entry of goods through all available crossings, is essential to meet the needs of the people in Gaza. A meaningful scale-up of humanitarian response in Gaza will also require improved safety for humanitarian workers and humanitarian assets. The presence and activities of the United Nations system, including its agencies and bodies, remain fundamental for such humanitarian response, protection and development assistance. Civilians must be protected and those seeking to return to their communities must have safe passage. All parties must comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law. The protection of civilians is paramount in any armed conflict.
30. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) remains the backbone of all humanitarian response in Gaza. No organization can replace or substitute the capacity of UNRWA and its mandate from the General Assembly to serve Palestine refugees and civilians in urgent need of life-saving humanitarian assistance. Despite severe displacement and hardship, UNRWA staff continue to provide life-saving assistance. The Agency plays a pivotal role in the broader United Nations humanitarian operation, including with respect to fuel distribution for hospitals, water desalination and sewage processing. The Agency facilitates inter-agency coordination and hosts humanitarian partners, thereby ensuring the continuity of essential services. UNRWA remains the only entity capable of restoring education for all school-age children post-conflict. Its approximately 13,000 personnel in Gaza constitute an indispensable resource for recovery and political transition, as outlined by the General Assembly and the Security Council. Ongoing implementation by UNRWA of the recommendations from the Independent Review of Mechanisms and Procedures to Ensure Adherence by UNRWA to the Humanitarian Principle of Neutrality will ensure that such assistance remains in strict adherence to neutrality. I reiterate that the ongoing implementation of the two laws concerning UNRWA adopted by the Knesset of Israel on 28 October 2024 could have devastating consequences for Palestine refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and could be detrimental to

peace and security in the region. I again urge Israel to act consistently with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and its other obligations under international law, including under international humanitarian law and under relevant agreements concerning privileges and immunities of the United Nations. National legislation cannot alter those obligations.

31. Any viable recovery and reconstruction efforts must be firmly rooted in a broader political and security framework that can address the effects of the war and the humanitarian catastrophe and lay the foundations for rebuilding Gaza as an integral part of a fully independent, democratic, contiguous, viable and sovereign Palestinian State, while addressing the legitimate security concerns of Israel. Critically, the Palestinian Authority must be at the centre of planning for and the implementation of recovery and reconstruction in Gaza. There must be a political and security framework that can address the humanitarian catastrophe, start early recovery, rebuild Gaza and lay the groundwork for a political process to end the occupation as rapidly as possible and establish a viable two-State solution. The framework must also reflect the principle that Gaza is and must remain an integral part of the Palestinian State, with no reductions in its territory, and that Gaza and the occupied West Bank must be unified politically, economically and administratively.
32. Central to achieving these objectives is the strengthening of the institutions of the Palestinian Authority, while rejecting any actions that systematically undermine its viability. International support is urgently needed to strengthen the capacities of the Palestinian Government and prepare it to reassume its full responsibilities in Gaza. Political, institutional and economic reforms will also be needed, but they must be achievable and properly financed. I urge the parties and Member States to align their efforts with these principles, and I reiterate that there can be no long-term solution in Gaza that is not fundamentally political. In this context, I again call for a reinvigorated political process to end the occupation and establish a two-State solution in line with United Nations resolutions, international law and previous agreements.
33. Recovery and reconstruction in Gaza will require a set of minimum operational conditions for the United Nations and its partners in Gaza. These conditions include: security, safety and access to the population; a minimum level of essential services; at-scale and predictable entry of humanitarian, commercial and reconstruction goods, including from the West Bank; and the ability for the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and their partners to obtain visas and permits, deploy experts and address other operational issues. The United Nations system and its partners, led by the Special Coordinator and the Deputy Special Coordinator, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, have continued their intense advocacy efforts with relevant parties to bring about these conditions and stand ready to scale up humanitarian and recovery interventions as soon as the situation on the ground allows.
34. With regard to the need for full accountability and bearing in mind the mechanisms outlined above, the General Assembly may wish to consider the best way to ensure coordination and cohesiveness among the different mechanisms. Work will continue to identify any accountability gaps.
35. In addition, increased support for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and its mandate would also assist overall coordination and effectiveness of efforts and enhance available synergies in this area.
36. In addition to these enabling conditions on the ground, an effective and sustainable recovery in Gaza will require vast political, financial, human and technical resources, including from Member States. In order to ensure that the recovery process is coherent and aligned with the principles outlined above, it must be grounded in a robust framework for strategic engagement between the United Nations, the Palestinian Authority, the Government of Israel, humanitarian and development partners, donors, regional countries and other stakeholders. Existing mechanisms established to support the Middle East peace process, such as the Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians and the Palestinian Authority's local aid coordination architecture, have proven effective over many years and could be further reinforced in support of recovery and reconstruction in Gaza. The United Nations system is committed to continuous dialogue with all relevant stakeholders on how these mechanisms can be further strengthened and augmented so as to improve its assistance to the Palestinian people.
37. The mechanism established according to Security Council resolution [2720 \(2023\)](#) will continue to be managed day-to-day by UNOPS, while reporting directly to the Deputy Special Coordinator, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator and, through him, to the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The mechanism's

database and pre-clearance processes will continue to operate within the existing United Nations coordination architecture in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

38. A strengthened Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process will play a critical role in resolving the conflict in line with United Nations resolutions and international law through its good offices role and by coordinating support to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority, including by ensuring that recovery and reconstruction efforts in Gaza are aligned with the above principles and priorities. The Secretariat will continue to engage closely with Member States to ensure that the Office remains adequately resourced in order to fulfil its mandate in the face of challenging and unpredictable conditions.
39. I remain steadfast in my commitment to support ending the unlawful occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territory as rapidly as possible and supporting Palestinians and Israelis in resolving the conflict in line with international law, relevant United Nations resolutions and bilateral agreements in pursuit of the achievement of the two-State solution, with Israel and a fully independent, democratic, contiguous and sovereign State of Palestine, of which the Gaza Strip is an integral part, living side by side in peace and security within secure and recognized borders, on the basis of the pre-1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States.

## **XX. UN Palestinian Rights Committee Bureau condemns Israel's UNRWA ban perpetuating Palestinian suffering in wake of ceasefire**

*On 31 January, the Bureau of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People issued the following [press release](#).*

The Bureau of the UN Palestinian Rights Committee welcomes the Gaza ceasefire as a crucial step in halting the Israeli military operations on the Palestinian civilian population since October 2023 and stemming the vast human suffering and loss of life. As hundreds of thousands return to devastated homes, urgent and sustained humanitarian aid is essential to all civilians in need in Gaza. The Bureau underscores the irreplaceable role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in delivering lifesaving assistance and stabilizing the ceasefire.

The Committee Bureau strongly condemns Israel's adoption of legislation banning UNRWA and stripping it of its privileges and immunities, obstructing its operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in direct violation of the General Assembly mandate and [resolution ES-10/25](#) recently adopted by the General Assembly by overwhelming majority. The Bureau calls on Israel, the occupying power, to immediately suspend and reverse the implementation of this legislation that curtails UNRWA's vital operations and will negatively impact delivery of essential services and assistance, including education and healthcare, to the Palestine refugees.

Coming immediately after the Gaza ceasefire deal, Israel's ban on UNRWA is a blatant move that will exacerbate Palestinian suffering – not with airstrikes and bombs, but with deprivation, hunger, and disease. As [affirmed by the International Court of Justice](#) (ICJ) Advisory Opinion of July 2024, Israel, due to its status as an occupying power, has no sovereignty in any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, where the UNRWA headquarters is located. The UNRWA ban is as unlawful as the Israeli occupation itself, which must end, as determined by the ICJ and consecutive General Assembly [resolution ES-10/24](#) of September 2024. This unprecedented attack on a UN-mandated agency deepens the suffering of millions of Palestine refugees, for whom UNRWA is a lifeline for survival. The Agency's operations are essential in all fields of operation, including to alleviating the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, restoring basic services and sustaining the ceasefire and cannot be replaced.

Israel's actions violate the United Nations Charter, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, its obligations as the occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention and multiple General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. Such ongoing Israeli policies and measures will cripple humanitarian efforts, hinder Gaza's recovery, and destabilize the ceasefire, jeopardizing regional stability. Israel must immediately cease all attacks on UNRWA and its humanitarian operations in the Occupied Palestinian



Territory, including East Jerusalem, and cease all violations of international law and the human rights of the Palestinian people.

The Committee Bureau urgently appeals to the General Assembly, the Security Council, and all Member States to categorically reject Israel's unlawful legislation, demand its immediate repeal, and insist that Israel uphold UNRWA's mandate. The Bureau urges prompt ICJ action, as [\*requested by the General Assembly\*](#) on 19 December 2024, to urgently deliver an Advisory Opinion on the obligations of Israel in relation to the presence and activities of the United Nations, other international organizations and third States to uphold the rule of law and obligations thereunder and to avert further Palestinian suffering. The Committee Bureau reaffirms its support for the ceasefire agreement and calls for its full respect and implementation, leading to a lasting cessation of hostilities and a just, enduring peace, based on international law and the relevant UN resolutions and achieving the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 lines.

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