

**Statement by the Committee Chair on the Deteriorating Situation in the
Occupied Palestinian Territory**

**STATEMENT TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL MINISTERIAL
MEETING**

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**OPEN DEBATE
ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST,
INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION**

New York, 29 April 2025

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Committee on the Rights of the Palestinian People welcomes H.E. Mr. Jean-Noël Barrot, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, and congratulates France on its Security Council presidency this month, and for convening this important Ministerial level meeting on the Palestine Question. We also thank Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his briefing and tireless efforts.

The Gaza ceasefire offered hope after months of devastation. The decision by Israel, the occupying Power, to collapse the ceasefire on 18 March, however, plunged Gaza back into chaos, erasing modest gains and worsening the already-catastrophic humanitarian crisis. Israel's punitive blockade, preventing all humanitarian access to Gaza, has caused acute shortages of food, water, fuel, and medicine, compounding conditions of starvation, diseases and deprivation.

We condemn resumed Israeli military strikes across Gaza, which have rendered the entire territory unsafe. From 18 March to 22 April, at least 224 strikes hit homes and IDP tents. Over 51,000 Palestinians have been killed since October 2023, with thousands still more missing, their bodies unrecovered under the rubble of destroyed buildings, while others have been disappeared in Israel's prisons or mass graves.

Israel's renewed "evacuation orders" are effectively forced displacements. Since 18 March, 21 such orders have forced tens of thousands to flee once again into overcrowded, unsafe areas without basic services. This raises grave concerns of forcible transfer—a breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Humanitarian aid remains blocked. Israel has prevented essential supplies from entering Gaza for weeks. Food stocks are exhausted, water production has collapsed, and shelter materials are depleted. OCHA reports that nearly all of Gaza's two million residents now rely on charity kitchens. The World Food Programme warns that 91% face acute food insecurity.

Health services have collapsed. Polio vaccinations for 600,000 children have stopped. As UNRWA Commissioner-General Lazzarini asked: *"How much longer until hollow words become action—to lift the siege, resume the ceasefire, and save what remains of our humanity?"*

The Committee reminds that under international humanitarian law, Israel, as the occupying power, must ensure supplies and relief to populations under its control. Security Council resolutions 2730 (2024) and 2417 (2018) condemn the unlawful denial of humanitarian aid. Israel must comply forthwith.

The Committee is deeply alarmed by the 13 April Israeli strike on Al Ahli Hospital, rendering one of Gaza's few functioning hospitals inoperative. We commend UNDP's efforts to restore the hospital's capacity, which is now in jeopardy. Israel's 19 April admission of a fatal strike on medical workers is not enough amid ongoing aggression against the Palestinian people. Medical facilities and personnel must be protected. There must be accountability.

Israel's aggression has also intensified in the West Bank. Widespread violations and military operations have displaced tens of thousands. UN Women and UNICEF report rising malnutrition, especially among pregnant women and children, and deepening trauma among the population, including as a result of incessant settler attacks on Palestinian communities.

We lament the loss of UNRWA's vital services due to Israel's unlawful ban. This has left countless Palestinians without food, shelter, or healthcare. UNRWA's mandate is indispensable and irreplaceable for refugees who have endured over 75 years of dispossession. Its mandate remains in force until a just solution for the plight of the Palestine refugees is realized, including their right of return.

The Committee continues to condemn Israel's use of disproportionate and unrelenting force, in violation of international law, including the Charter, international humanitarian law and human rights laws. The relentless attacks on medical staff and journalists have worsened the crisis, with hundreds of health workers and journalists killed since October 2023, in addition to the killing of an unprecedented number of humanitarians, the majority of them Palestinian staff of UNRWA.

We reject any proposals to displace Palestinians from Gaza under the guise of so-called "voluntary migration" or redevelopment—including the outrageous suggestion of transforming the Strip into a 'Riviera'—to entrench this unlawful occupation. These proposals are inhumane and illegal.

The Committee welcomes preparations for the June International Conference on the implementation of the UN resolutions pertaining to the Question of Palestine and the two-State solution, co-chaired by France and Saudi Arabia, in follow up to GA resolutions ES-10/24 and 79/81, and calls on the Council to advance its intended outcome.

As violence persists and this horrific crisis worsens, we urge concrete international action to end Israel's aggression and occupation, and to secure a just peace that ensures the rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-

determination, and the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in conformity with international law and the relevant UN resolutions.

All parties must focus on achieving a ceasefire, the release of all hostages and those arbitrarily detained, and facilitating immediate, unimpeded humanitarian access, rather than justifying continued violence. There is no military solution to this conflict; a lasting solution lies in a political settlement based on two states, living side by side in equal dignity and rights, in line with UN resolutions and international law.

Excellencies, this year marks 77 years since the Nakba, a continuing injustice. As mandated by the GA, the Committee will commemorate it on 15 May in the ECOSOC Chamber and invites all to join in solidarity, and to commit to redoubling our collective efforts to resolve this historic injustice.

Thank you.