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I. UN Special Rapporteur warns that statements and actions by Israeli leaders reflect genocidal intent and conduct

On 1 October, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Francesca Albanese, presented a report to the Human Rights Council. The conclusions of the [report](#) are reproduced below.

VII. Conclusions:

83. The Gaza genocide is a tragedy foretold, and one that risks expanding to other Palestinians under Israeli rule. Since its establishment, Israel has treated the occupied people as a hated encumbrance and threat to be eradicated, subjecting millions of Palestinians, for generations, to everyday indignities, mass killing, mass incarceration, forced displacement, racial segregation and apartheid. Advancing its goal of “Greater Israel” threatens to erase the Indigenous Palestinian population.
84. Obscured by false Israeli narratives of a war waged in “self-defence”, the genocidal conduct of Israel must be viewed within a broader context, as numerous actions (totality of conduct) jointly targeting the Palestinians as such (totality of a people) across the entire territory where they reside (totality of the land), in furtherance of the political ambitions of Israel for sovereignty over the whole of former Mandatory Palestine. Today, the genocide of the Palestinians appears to be the means to an end: the complete removal or eradication of Palestinians from the land so integral to their identity, and which is illegally and openly coveted by Israel.
85. Statements and actions by Israeli leaders reflect a genocidal intent and conduct; they have often used the Biblical story of Amalek to justify the extermination of “the Gazans”, erasing Gaza and violently displacing Palestinians, thereby casting Palestinians as a whole as legitimate targets.
86. Individuals clearly identifiable as perpetrators should be prosecuted. However, it is the entire State apparatus that has engineered, articulated and executed genocidal violence, through acts which in their totality may lead to the destruction of the Palestinian people. This must stop; urgent action is required to ensure the full application of the Genocide Convention and full protection of the Palestinians.
87. This ongoing genocide is doubtlessly the consequence of the exceptional status and protracted impunity that has been afforded to Israel. Israel has systematically and flagrantly violated international law, including Security Council resolutions and ICJ orders. This has emboldened the hubris of Israel and its defiance of international law. As the ICC Prosecutor has warned, “if we do not demonstrate our willingness to apply the law equally, if it is seen as applied selectively, we will be creating the conditions of its complete collapse. This is the true risk we face at this perilous moment.”
88. As the world watches the first live-streamed settler-colonial genocide, only justice can heal the wounds that political expedience has allowed to fester. The devastation of so many lives is an outrage to humanity and all that international law stands for.

II. Secretary-General appeals to Security Council for immediate ceasefires in Gaza and Lebanon

On 2 October, Secretary-General António Guterres delivered the following [remarks](#) at the Security Council.

The raging fires in the Middle East are fast becoming an inferno. Exactly one week ago, I briefed the Security Council about the alarming situation in Lebanon. Since then, things have gone from bad to much, much worse.

As I told the Council last week, the Blue Line has seen tensions for years. But since October, exchanges of fire have expanded in scope, depth, and intensity. I stated that the almost daily exchanges of fire by Hezbollah and other non-state armed groups in Lebanon and the Israel Defense Forces are in repeated violation of Security Council resolution 1701.

I emphasized that the daily use of weapons by non-State armed groups is in violation of Security Council resolutions 1559 and 1701. And I stressed that Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected and the Lebanese state must have full control of weapons throughout Lebanon.

In the few short days since then, we have seen a dramatic escalation, so dramatic that I wonder what remains of the framework this Council established with resolution 1701.

Israeli forces have conducted relentless air strikes across Lebanon, including Beirut. The United States and France, with the support of several other countries, have proposed a temporary ceasefire allowing for the restart of negotiations.

Israel refused that proposal and stepped up its strikes, including bombing the Hezbollah headquarters where its leader was killed. Hezbollah has continued rocket and missile attacks on Israel. And yesterday, the Israel Defense Forces conducted what it stated were “limited incursions” into southern Lebanon.

UNIFIL peacekeepers remain in position, and the UN flag continues to fly despite Israel’s request to relocate.

I reiterate our deep appreciation to the military and civilian members of our UN peacekeeping force, UNIFIL, and to troop contributing countries. The safety and security of all UN personnel must be ensured.

Civilians are paying a terrible price, which I utterly condemn. Since last October, more than 1,700 people have been killed in Lebanon, including over 100 children and 194 women. Over 346,000 people are confirmed to have been displaced from their homes. Government estimates put this number as high as one million. Another 128,000 people, both Syrian and Lebanese, have crossed into Syria.

The UN has mobilized all its capacities to provide urgent humanitarian aid in Lebanon and I ask the international community to fully fund our appeal. Since October 8th, Hezbollah attacks on Israel have killed 49 people - with over 60,000 people displaced from their homes. It is absolutely essential to avoid an all-out war in Lebanon which would have profound and devastating consequences.

Yesterday, Iran launched approximately 200 ballistic missiles towards Israel. It stated it was in response to the killings of Hassan Nasrallah and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corp commander Abbas Nilforoushan last week, as well as that of the Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran in July.

Millions of people across Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory were forced to seek shelter. One person was killed from the Iranian strikes, a Palestinian in the occupied West Bank.

As I did in relation to the Iranian attack in April, and as should have been obvious yesterday in the context of the condemnation I expressed, I again strongly condemn yesterday’s massive missile attack by Iran on Israel. These attacks paradoxically do nothing to support the cause of the Palestinian people or reduce their suffering.

Almost one year has passed since the atrocious 7 October acts of terror by Hamas and the taking of hostages. Since last October, Israel has conducted in Gaza the most deadly and destructive military campaign in my years as Secretary-General. The suffering endured by the Palestinian people in Gaza is beyond imagination.

At the same time, the situation in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continues to deteriorate with Israeli military operations, construction of settlements, evictions, land grabs, and intensification of settler attacks, progressively undermining any possibility of a two-state solution.

And, simultaneously, armed Palestinian groups have also used violence. Hamas has continued to launch rockets, and just yesterday 7 Israelis were killed in a terror attack in Jaffa.

The events of the past week, the past month, and indeed nearly the past year make it clear:

It is high time for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, with the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, the effective delivery of humanitarian aid to Palestinians in Gaza, and irreversible progress to a two-state solution.

It is high time for a cessation of hostilities in Lebanon, real action towards full implementation of Security Council resolutions 1559 and 1701, paving the way for diplomatic efforts for sustainable peace.

It is high time to stop the sickening cycle of escalation after escalation that is leading the people of the Middle East straight over the cliff.

Each escalation has served as a pretext for the next. We must never lose sight of the tremendous toll that this growing conflict is taking on civilians. We cannot look away from systematic violations of international humanitarian law.

This deadly cycle of tit-for-tat violence must stop. Time is running out.

III. The Maldives files a declaration of intervention in the ICJ genocide case (South Africa v. Israel)

On 2 October, the Maldives, invoking Article 63 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice, [filed](#) in the Registry of the Court a declaration of intervention in the case concerning Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel). The ICJ press release is reproduced below.

Yesterday, the Maldives, invoking Article 63 of the Statute of the Court, filed in the Registry of the Court a declaration of intervention in the case concerning Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel).

Pursuant to Article 63 of the Statute, whenever the construction of a convention to which States other than those concerned in the case are parties is in question, each of those States has the right to intervene in the proceedings. If they do so, the construction given by the judgment of the Court will be equally binding upon them.

In availing itself of the right of intervention conferred by Article 63, the Maldives relies on its status as a party to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the “Genocide Convention”). The Maldives states in its declaration that its intervention focuses on “the proper construction of the provisions concerning the incitement to commit genocide and the duty to punish the incitement of genocide in Articles I, III, IV and VI of the Genocide Convention”, as well as “the proper construction of Articles II and IX of the . . . Convention”.

In accordance with Article 83 of the Rules of Court, South Africa and Israel have been invited to furnish written observations on the declaration of intervention.

IV. UN human rights experts urge FIFA to respect international law regarding Israeli football clubs

On 3 October, Alexandra Xanthaki, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; Fernanda Hopenhaym (Chairperson), Lyra Jakulevičienė (Vice Chairperson), Pichamon Yeophantong, Damilola Olawuyi, and Robert McCorquodale, Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises; and Ashwini K.P., Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance issued the following [press release](#).

FIFA must respect and demand respect for international law from Israeli football clubs, UN experts said today.

Over the years, at least eight football clubs have developed or have been identified as playing in Israeli colonial settlements of the occupied West Bank. Israeli clubs, many of which have exhibited racism towards

the Palestinian people and players over the years, are integrated in the Israeli Football Association (IFA). A ninth club, based inside Israel, plays some home games in a settlement.

“Such integration and conduct within the IFA amounts to recognising as legal the situation arising from the unlawful presence of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory. This is in stark violation of international law, as reiterated by the International Court of Justice in its [Advisory Opinion](#) of 19 July 2024, that stressed that the transfer of Israeli settlers to the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Israel’s maintenance of their presence, is in violation of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people and Israel’s obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention. Legally, this constitutes an act of aggression in violation of jus ad bellum. These are grave breaches of the Convention and amount to several crimes under the Rome Statute,” the experts said.

In its Advisory Opinion, the International Court of Justice clearly stated that Israel’s occupation of the Gaza strip and West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is unlawful, along with the associated settlement and annexation. The ICJ noted that Israel’s policies violate the prohibition on racial segregation and apartheid set out in article 3 of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. The Court mandates Israel to end its occupation, dismantle its colonies and separation wall, the entire associate regime, provide full reparations to Palestinian people and facilitate the return of Palestinian people displaced since 1967.

“We call on the FIFA Council, who will examine this matter during its meeting in October 2024, to ensure that its decisions are in conformity with non-derogable norms of international law,” the experts said.

“We remind FIFA that international human rights law, which includes the right to self-determination, as well as the prohibition of racial discrimination and apartheid, applies to private international organisations, especially those that have global jurisdiction and mandates such as itself. FIFA must also fulfill its responsibility to respect human rights in accordance with the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#),” they said.

“The autonomy and self-regulation in sport must not be detrimental to fundamental human rights,” the experts said.

They urged FIFA to ensure implementation of its zero-tolerance policy against discriminatory conduct and racism when it comes to Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory.

V. Security Council’s ten elected members (E10) reaffirm strong support for the Secretary-General, as Israeli Government declared him persona non grata

On 3 October, ten elected members of the Security Council (Algeria, Ecuador, Guyana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and Switzerland) made a [statement summarized below](#).

Ambassador Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett of Guyana, on behalf of the Security Council’s ten elected members (E10), read a statement expressing concern about the escalation of tensions in the Middle East, condemning the current cycle of violence and calling for an immediate end to all hostilities.

Speaking at the stakeout podium outside the Council, Rodrigues-Birkett said, “we also call on all parties to respect their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law. We further emphasise that a diplomatic solution is the only appropriate way forward and urge all parties to prioritise dialogue and diplomacy and ensure the protection of civilians.”

The statement also underscored their “full support to the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and the UN system.”

On Wednesday, the Israeli Government declared the Secretary-General *persona non grata*, barring him from entering Israeli territory.

VI. UN Special Rapporteur: universities must respect peaceful activism and revise repressive policies targeting pro-Palestine solidarity movement

On 4 October, Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Gina Romero, made the following [statement](#).

After reviewing persistent allegations, and talking with around 150 people from 30 countries, including students and faculty members, I can conclude that the situation surrounding protests and international solidarity with the Palestinian people and victims within university environments, coupled with inadequate institutional responses, reveals a widespread hostile environment for the exercise of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

Now that peaceful assemblies in universities worldwide have resumed after holidays, re-joining the growing global movement to safeguard Palestinian rights and lives, and anticipating commemoration mobilisations by both Israeli and Palestinian solidarity groups in October, I urge academic institutions to:

i) Recognise and respect the importance of youth meaningful and free engagement, and their valuable contributions for human rights, dignity, peace, and justice, including through exercising their public freedoms;

ii) Immediately cease the stigmatisation and hostilities that silence members of the academic community and discourage the exercise of their rights;

iii) Actively facilitate and protect peaceful assemblies, including by prioritising negotiation and mediation where necessary, and refrain from calling on law enforcement to disperse peaceful protests;

iv) Refrain from and cease any surveillance and retributions against students and staff for expressing their views or participating in peaceful assemblies;

v) Ensure transparent and independent investigation into human rights violations that occurred in the context of the camps and other peaceful assemblies, revoke sanctions related to the exercise of fundamental freedoms, and provide effective and full remedies to affected students and staff; and

vi) Ensure that their regulations are in line with international standards.

Universities and other educational institutions have an important window of opportunity to learn from the experiences of the university-based pro-Palestine solidarity movement and repair the harm. They must recognise that their responsibility extends beyond campus borders, their actions have the potential to shape political discourse, culture, civic education, and ultimately, the future sustainability of democracy, freedoms and human rights. Respecting and guaranteeing dissent is essential to ensure the universities remain spaces for free thought, speech and academic freedom, as well to guarantee freedom of expression, assembly and association.

The brutal repression of the university-based protest movement is posing a profound threat to democratic systems and institutions; it risks alienating an entire generation, damaging their participation and perception of their role in democratic processes, in addition to failing the responsibility to prevent atrocity crimes and to contribute to peace.

The full statement is available [here](#).

VII. Marking one year since 7 October attacks, Secretary-General urges ‘It is time for the release of the hostages, time to silence the guns’

On 5 October, the Secretary-General, António Guterres, issued the following [message](#).

Today marks one year since the horrific events of 7 October 2023 when Hamas launched a large-scale terror attack in Israel killing over 1,250 Israelis and foreign nationals, including children and women. More than 250 people were abducted and taken to Gaza, including many women and children.

The 7 October 2023 attack scarred souls, and on this day, we remember all those who were brutally killed and suffered unspeakable violence, including sexual violence, as they were simply living their lives.

This is a day for the global community to repeat in the loudest voice our utter condemnation of the abhorrent acts of Hamas, including the taking of hostages.

Over the course of the past year, I have met with the families of hostage, learned more about the lives, hopes and dreams of their loved ones, and shared in their anguish and pain.

I cannot imagine the torture they are forced to endure every day. I demand once again the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. Until then, Hamas must allow the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit those hostages.

The seventh of October is naturally a day to focus on the events of that awful day. I express my solidarity with all the victims and their loved ones.

Since 7 October, a wave of shocking violence and bloodshed has erupted. The war that has followed the terrible attacks of one year ago continues to shatter lives and inflict profound human suffering for Palestinians in Gaza, and now the people of Lebanon. I have spoken out about this often and clearly.

It is time for the release of the hostages. Time to silence the guns. Time to stop the suffering that has engulfed the region. Time for peace, international law and justice. The United Nations is fully committed to achieving those goals. In the midst of so much bloodshed and division, we must hold on to hope.

Let us honour the memory of the victims, reunite families and end the suffering and violence in the whole Middle East. And let us never stop working for a lasting solution to the conflict where Israel, Palestine and all other countries of the region can finally live in peace and dignity and with respect for one another.

VIII. President of the General Assembly emphasizes that human suffering must end now

On 6 October, marking one year since the attacks on 7 October 2023, the President of the General Assembly, Philemon Yang, issued the following [press statement](#).

As we mark the one-year anniversary of the brutal attacks by Hamas against Israel on 7 October 2023, the Middle East region has been witnessing death, destruction and displacement for too long.

Let me again reiterate that the human suffering must end and it must end now. We need an immediate ceasefire, the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages and a return to dialogue with a view to finding diplomatic solutions to the conflicts in the region.

No sustainable peace will be achieved militarily. Only a two-state solution, based on the UN Charter, international law, and relevant UN resolutions, can guarantee lasting peace and security for both the people of Israel and Palestine and indeed for the rest of the region.

I call for all parties, Israel, Hamas, and Hezbollah, to abide by their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law. I also urgently call for the protection of civilians and the unimpeded access to the much-needed humanitarian assistance.

IX. 35 UN human rights experts call for end of violence and for accountability after year of human suffering and blatant disregard for international law

On 7 October, Morris Tidball-Binz, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967; Ashwini K.P. Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; Fernanda Hopenhaym (Chairperson), Lyra Jakulevičienė (Vice-Chair), Pichamon Yeophantong, Damilola Olawuyi, Robert McCorquodale, Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, Farida Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on the right to education; Tomoya Obokata, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences; Olivier De Shutter, UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights; Mary Lawlor, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Gabriella Citroni (Chair-Rapporteur), Grażyna Baranowska (Vice-Chair), Aua Baldé and Ana Lorena Delgadillo Pérez, Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; Mama Fatima Singhateh, Special Rapporteur on sale the and sexual exploitation of children; Gina Romero, Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association; Ben Saul, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism; Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Surya Deva, Special Rapporteur on the right to development; Laura Nyirinkindi (Chair), Claudia Flores (Vice-Chair), Dorothy Estrada Tanck, Ivana Krstić and Haina Lu, Working group on discrimination against women and girls; George Katrougalos, Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order; Nicolas Levrat, Special Rapporteur on the human rights on minority issues; Alexandra Xanthaki, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; Paula Gaviria Betancur, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons; Cecilia M. Bailliet, Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity; Margaret Satterthwaite, Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers; Heba Hagrass, Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities; Astrid Puentes Riaño, Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment; and Reem Alsalem Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences issued the following [press release](#).

The past year has seen a devastating escalation in human suffering, with severe consequences for the Palestinian people, Israelis and the entire Middle East region. We express today, our heartfelt compassion to all victims and their families, especially the children, who should have been spared the scourge of war, and recall the heavy human cost of this conflict and immediate need for peace and accountability.

On 7 October 2023, Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups killed approximately 1,200 persons in Israel, of whom at least 809 were civilians, including women, children and older persons. On this day, 252 people were abducted and taken to Gaza as hostages and of these nearly 100 remain in captivity.

The crimes committed on that day, including murder, hostage-taking, and sexual violence against women and girls, amount to serious violations of international law and constitute [war crimes](#), and possibly [crimes against humanity](#).

The ensuing military attack by Israel on Gaza has killed approximately 42,000 Palestinians in Gaza, including 17,000 children injured more than 97,000, many with lifelong injuries, as of 6 October 2024, and displaced nearly 2 million. The majority of those killed are [children](#) and [women](#), while an estimated 10,000 Palestinian bodies remain under the rubble with no possibility to retrieve and identify them to bring solace to grieving families. In the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, nearly 700 have been killed including 176 children. Israeli Forces also killed 986 healthcare workers, humanitarian workers, among them 225 UNRWA staff, and 126 journalists, as well as destroyed hospitals, schools, and refugee camps, leaving no safe place in Gaza.

The serious violations of international law such as, [murder](#), intentional targeting of civilian objects, disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks, [starvation](#), forcible transfer, arbitrary displacement, sexual violence, persecution, and outrages against life and dignity, including disrespect for the dead, committed by Israeli Forces since the beginning of the war in Gaza in October 2023 constitute war crimes and possibly crimes against humanity. As a result, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) warned there was a real and imminent risk of irreparable prejudice to the right of Palestinians to be protected from genocide.

International judicial mechanisms, the UN and the international community should thoroughly, impartially, and independently investigate these grave violations, establish chain of command, prosecute and punish perpetrators, and ensure full reparation for victims and their families. Parties to the conflict must allow prompt and full access to evidence to establish facts and ensure accountability for perpetrators.

As the Secretary General stated nearly one year ago, the violence on 7 October did not happen in a vacuum. Obscured by false narratives, and years of discrimination, racial segregation and/or apartheid perpetrated against the Palestinian people, as recognised by the ICJ on 19 July 2024, this war risks leading to the erasure of Palestinian presence in the occupied Palestinian territory and an endless reality of insecurity and enormous suffering for the Palestinian and Israeli people alike.

We continue to urge the international community to ensure an end to [transfers of arms](#) by States and companies to Israel, including through proxies, to avoid responsibility in war crimes and crimes against humanity by complicity.

We are alarmed by the expansion of the violence and hostilities in other countries in the region, in particular the escalation in Lebanon, which has so far resulted in the death of more than 2,000 persons, including women and children, the injury of more than 9,500 persons, and displacement of hundreds of thousands. This spillover of hostilities blatantly undermines international law and the UN Charter and endangers peace and stability of a region that has suffered decades of conflicts.

All parties to the conflict with the support of the international community must:

- Immediately cease hostilities and guarantee safety and security of civilian populations, including through full compliance with UN resolutions and the [ICJ provisional measures](#) to Israel and Gaza;
- Immediately and unconditionally release all hostages detained in Gaza, and thousands of Palestinians arbitrarily held in Israeli detention;
- Establish the fate and whereabouts of victims of enforced disappearances and acts tantamount to;
- Ensure unhindered access of humanitarian relief and humanitarian workers in Gaza;
- Allow full and unrestricted access to UN independent experts to Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, to conduct investigations into violations of international law, in particular arbitrary killings, enforced disappearances, and torture;
- Immediately and unconditionally return dead bodies and human remains retained by parties to the conflict, including hundreds of Palestinian bodies withheld for decades, and seek the assistance of international community to retrieve, identify and return bodies to families;
- Halt escalation to other countries in the region;
- Fully cooperate with the international community to realise the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, as necessary to pave the way for sustainable peace and accountability and turn the page on decades of violence and injustice, including through the comprehensive implementation of the [ICJ advisory opinion](#) 2024.

The experts reiterated their availability to assist in genuine efforts to establish truth, justice and reparation for violations of international law in the context of this conflict.

X. Bolivia files a declaration of intervention in the ICJ Gaza genocide case (South Africa v. Israel)

On 9 October, Bolivia, invoking Article 63 of the Statute of the Court, [filed](#) in the Registry of the Court a Declaration of intervention in the case concerning the Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel). The press release from ICJ is reproduced below.

Yesterday, Bolivia, invoking Article 63 of the Statute of the Court, filed in the Registry of the Court a Declaration of intervention in the case concerning the Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel).

Pursuant to Article 63 of the Statute, whenever the construction of a convention to which States other than those concerned in the case are parties is in question, each of those States has the right to intervene in the proceedings. If they do so, the construction given by the judgment of the Court will be equally binding upon them.

In availing itself of the right of intervention conferred by Article 63, Bolivia relies on its status as a party to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the “Genocide Convention”). Bolivia considers that the construction of Articles I, II, III, IV, V, VI and IX of the Genocide Convention is in question in the present case. In its Declaration, Bolivia sets out its interpretation of these provisions.

In accordance with Article 83 of the Rules of Court, South Africa and Israel have been invited to furnish written observations on the Declaration of intervention.

XI. UNRWA Commissioner General briefs Security Council on Gaza war, Israeli legislation against UNRWA

On 9 October, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini [briefed](#) the UN Security Council.

I deeply regret that one year after the abhorrent attacks against Israel, and the catastrophic war on Gaza, no end is in sight to the brutal violence engulfing the region.

It has been a year of profound loss and suffering. A year of dehumanization and barbarism. Hostages taken from Israel remain captive, their families left in deep and prolonged distress.

Gaza is unrecognizable. A sea of rubble. A graveyard for tens of thousands of people, including far too many children. Almost the entire population is displaced. People have been forced to flee multiple times, searching for safety that does not exist.

The latest developments in the north are especially alarming. Hundreds of thousands of people are again being pushed to move to the south, where living conditions are intolerable. And yet again, Gazans are teetering on the edge of a man-made famine.

Children in Gaza have not been spared. They are killed, injured and orphaned in shocking numbers. More than 650,000 children are out of school, deeply traumatized and living in the rubble. They have already lost two years of learning.

Palestinians are no strangers to loss. But to be dispossessed from education, which has always been a source of pride, is new. We cannot afford to lose an entire generation and sow the seeds for future hatred and extremism. That is why UNRWA, beyond its lifesaving operations, has resumed some learning activities in Gaza.

Every day, we provide psychosocial services to thousands of children. We build on these activities to help them read, write, and do some basic arithmetic. Bringing children back to learning should be a collective and urgent priority.

UNRWA has also played a critical role in an emergency vaccination campaign against polio, which has returned to Gaza, 25 years after eradication.

Together with WHO and UNICEF, UNRWA vaccinated more than half a million children during short pauses in military activities.

The second round of the campaign is planned for mid-October. We hope to succeed again. For this we need sufficient political will.

Beyond Gaza, the West Bank is gripped by escalating violence. Nearly 700 people have been killed in the past year. Among them, more than 160 children. Civilian life is increasingly militarized, and settlement activity is expanding aggressively. The Israeli Security Forces routinely destroy public infrastructure during military operations, inflicting collective punishment on Palestinians.

Lebanon is the latest casualty of this widening conflict. Civilians are paying a heavy price. Air strikes by Israeli forces are killing and injuring thousands, and displacing hundreds of thousands, while Hezbollah continues to attack Israel with rockets.

UNRWA has opened 11 shelters in Lebanon, hosting more than 4,500 Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian displaced persons. The need for the Agency's services in Gaza, the occupied West Bank, and Lebanon has never been greater. And we have never been under fiercer attack.

The blatant disregard for international humanitarian law, and a near total breakdown of civil order, is crippling the humanitarian response in Gaza.

Gaza is the most dangerous place in the world for aid workers, 226 UNRWA personnel have been killed in 12 months. United Nations premises, including two-thirds of UNRWA's buildings, have been damaged or destroyed. Our premises have also been used for military purposes by Palestinian armed groups, including Hamas, and the Israeli Security Forces.

Humanitarian aid convoys are looted by armed gangs and obstructed by Israeli soldiers defying their own chain of command. Without a lasting ceasefire, the immediate and unconditional release of hostages, and unfettered humanitarian access, the aid operation will collapse, plunging two million people into chaos.

In the broader occupied Palestinian territory, the Agency's operational space is shrinking. Senior Israeli officials have described destroying UNRWA as a war goal.

Legislation to end our operations is ready for final adoption by the Israeli Knesset. It seeks to ban UNRWA's presence and operations in the territory of Israel, revoking its privileges and immunities, in violation of international law. If the bills are adopted, the consequences will be severe.

Operationally, the entire humanitarian response in Gaza, which rests on UNRWA's infrastructure, may disintegrate.

Coordination with Israel would cease, further disrupting the provision of shelter, food, and healthcare to people in desperate need as winter approaches.

More than 650,000 children would lose any hope of resuming their education and an entire generation would be sacrificed.

In the West Bank, the delivery of education, primary healthcare and emergency aid to hundreds of thousands of Palestine Refugees would grind to a halt.

Legally, the Knesset legislation violates Israel's obligations under the United Nations Charter and international law. It defies the will of the international community expressed through General Assembly resolution 302 on UNRWA, and deepens violations recognized by the International Court of Justice.

Politically, the anti-UNRWA legislation, which is part of a broader campaign to dismantle the Agency, seeks to strip Palestinians from their refugee status, and change, unilaterally, the parameters for a future political solution.

These attacks set a grave precedent for other conflict situations where governments may wish to eliminate an inconvenient United Nations presence.

They target not just UNRWA, but any individual or entity calling for compliance with international law and a peaceful political solution. Failing to push back against attempts to intimidate and undermine the United Nations in the occupied Palestinian territory will eventually compromise humanitarian and human rights work worldwide.

This Council must decide to which extent it will tolerate acts that strike at the heart of multilateralism and compromise international peace and security. The climate of impunity that prevails will not dissipate without decisive action.

We can uphold the UN Charter and enforce international law, including the Geneva Conventions and the decisions of international courts, without exception. Or we can concede that the post-World War II rules-based international order is at an end.

The devastation of the past year should pull us back from the brink of creating dangerous new norms of warfare and reneging on our decades-long commitment to Palestine Refugees.

UNRWA is an integral part of the United Nations, which anchors the multilateral system. I urge you to shield this UN agency from efforts to end its mandate, arbitrarily and prematurely, in the absence of a long-promised political solution. Thank you.

XII. OCHA appeals to the Security Council to address the escalating humanitarian crisis in Gaza

On 9 October, the Director of Financing and Partnerships Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Lisa Doughten, delivered the following [statement](#) at a Security Council meeting.

Thank you for this opportunity to update you on the humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, both Gaza and the West Bank.

The past year has brought unimaginable suffering. It has been one year since the horrendous attack by Hamas and other armed groups in Israel. And rockets continue to be fired indiscriminately into Israel.

Few times in recent history have we witnessed suffering and destruction of the size, scale, and scope that we see in Gaza. In the past year, this Council has been briefed repeatedly on the horror unfolding in Gaza, at least monthly on average.

Once again, we find ourselves at a critical juncture. Unfortunately, much of what I am about to say mirrors what we reported a month ago. Widespread suffering persists while the humanitarian situation worsens.

The recent evacuation orders by Israeli authorities for large areas of northern Gaza, along with intensified ground operations, risk more death, destruction and yet another mass displacement of civilians. Once again, utter chaos ensues as the world watches on.

Before we turn to the situation, we express, deep concern about the ongoing legislation to stop the activities of UNRWA [United Nations Relief and Works Agency]. This would be disastrous for the provision of aid and essential services to millions of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

Nearly every one of the more than 2 million people in Gaza receives some form of aid or service provision from UNRWA, along with nearly one million Palestine refugees in the West Bank. If approved, such legislation would diametrically be opposed to the UN Charter and in violation of Israel's obligations under international law.

Over the past year, relentless Israeli-issued displacement orders have affected almost 84 per cent of Gaza's territory. Around 90 percent of Gaza's population is internally displaced.

Hundreds of thousands of people are pressured to move south to Al Mawasi, but southern Gaza cannot accommodate more people. In Al Mawasi, where civilians were told to go, 12 Palestinians were reportedly killed and at least 26 others injured when two tents were struck in the camp at Al Mawasi on 1 October.

Evacuation orders are meant to protect civilians, but the exact opposite is happening. As we have said so many times, there is no safe place in Gaza.

Three of the ten partially functional hospitals in the north have been ordered to evacuate all patients without providing alternatives for relocating them. We have not been able to get fuel to other hospitals in the north.

There has been no electricity since October last year. Without electricity, or fuel for the generators, everything shuts down: medical facilities, water, sanitation, and other essential services. And bakeries are closing, deepening the already high levels of food insecurity.

As this conflict persists, civilians must have the essentials for their survival. They must be allowed to seek protection. Those displaced must be guaranteed the right to voluntarily return.

Severe impediments on the entry of essential commercial supplies and humanitarian access continue.

For instance, in September, humanitarian workers spent a total of 212 hours, that's nearly 9 days' worth of waiting, to receive a green light from Israeli authorities to undertake life-saving missions. And in the past week, there have been no humanitarian movements to the north, while both land crossings have been closed for supplies entering Zikim and Erez.

The north of Gaza has been cut off, putting at risk the second round of the polio vaccination campaign, scheduled for mid-October.

Further, essential commercial supplies entering Gaza have drastically reduced in the past week. In recent days, on average 50 truckloads of goods enter each day, quantities that do not begin to meet needs. Humanitarian assistance cannot be a substitute for the flow of commercial goods; and vice-versa.

Aid workers are only able to deliver a trickle of humanitarian aid through Israeli checkpoints. These are life threatening restrictions.

People are traumatized, hungry, digging with their bare hands in rubble for their loved ones. They are increasingly frustrated about the international community's failure to stop the hostilities. And, as the situation worsens, this anger is increasingly being directed at humanitarian workers.

The lack of adequate humanitarian access means that food insecurity and diseases are spreading fast. The severe lack of shelter supplies is likely to worsen health conditions and further undermine the dignity of vulnerable populations, potentially leading to life-threatening conditions, this coming winter.

Humanitarian partners report that women and children are hard-hit by the trauma of this war. Each day, according to UNRWA, 10 children are losing one or both of their legs. Gaza is home to the largest cohort of child amputees in modern history. Women are three times more likely to miscarry, and three times more likely to die from childbirth. And, yet humanitarians are not giving up.

We also remain deeply concerned about the worsening situation in the West Bank. Over the past year, Israeli military operations, along with rampant settler violence and house demolitions, have led to a sharp rise in fatalities, widespread destruction and forced displacement.

Just last week, on 4 October, 18 Palestinians, including women and children, were killed in an airstrike on a residential building in Tulkarm refugee camp; this was the single deadliest incident carried out by Israeli forces in the West Bank since OCHA began systematically documenting casualties in 2005.

In the West Bank, the use of lethal force must comply with international human rights law and the standards governing law enforcement. Tactics typically used during hostilities in armed conflict raise concerns about the excessive use of force.

We urge full respect for international law and compliance with the determinations of the International Court of Justice. Maximum influence must be exerted to alleviate the suffering of civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

We cannot claim ignorance to what is happening, nor can we afford to look away. That is why we repeat our calls for the Security Council, and Member States, to take action. This includes ensuring respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law by exerting necessary pressure and cooperating in pursuing accountability for international crimes. This means ensuring that all hostages are released. This means ensuring civilians are protected, and their essential needs for survival met, wherever they are, whether they evacuate or not. This means ensuring that humanitarian operations are protected and facilitated, including in accordance with the provisional orders of the International Court of Justice, for all civilians in need.

Urgent diplomatic efforts are needed to de-escalate the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to prevent a wider regional descent into bloodshed.

Member States must take steps to achieve an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and a path towards sustainable peace. These atrocities must end. Thank you.

XIII. UN human rights experts warn ‘The international legal order is breaking down in Gaza’ after a year of genocidal attacks

On 11 October, Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967; Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, Special Rapporteur on the rights to water and sanitation; Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing; George Katrougalos, Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order; Tlaleng Mofokeng, Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; Alexandra Xanthaki, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Nicolas Levrat, Special Rapporteur on the human rights on minority issues, Tomoya Obokata, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences; Gina Romero, Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association; 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; Heba Hagrass, Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities; Ashwini K.P. Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; Astrid Puentes Riaño, Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment; Farida Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on the right to education; Cecilia Bailliet, Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity; Siobhán Mullally, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; Laura Nyirinkindi (Chair), Claudia Flores (Vice-Chair), Dorothy Estrada Tanck, Ivana Krstić, and Haina Lu, Working group on discrimination against women and girls; Jovana Jezdimirovic Ranito (Chair-Rapporteur), Ravindran Daniel, Michelle Small, Joana de Deus Pereira, Working Group on the use of mercenaries; Geneviève Savigny (Chair-Rapporteur), Carlos Duarte, Uche Ewelukwa, Shalmali Guttal, Davit Hakobyan, Working Group on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas and Barbara G. Reynolds (Chair), Bina D'Costa, Catherine Namakula, Dominique Day, Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent issued the following [press release](#).

The world faces the most profound crisis since the end of World War II. The atrocities which the world witnessed in World War II resulted in a collective determination to say 'Never Again' and to create the United Nations to achieve that goal. However, one year since the 7 October attack by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups against Israel, the world has seen a brutal escalation of violence, resulting in genocidal attacks, ethnic cleansing and collective punishment of Palestinians, which risks breaking down the international multilateral system.

The Israeli military assault that commenced immediately after the October 7 attack, was accompanied by genocidal statements by Israeli leaders. On October 9, the Israeli Defense Minister Gallant ordered a "complete siege, no electricity, no food, no water, no fuel" and a full-on assault against the biggest open-air prison of our time. On 28 October, following weeks of air strikes on Gaza, just as the ground invasion began amid violent anti-Palestinian rhetoric by Israeli officials, public figures and others, Prime Minister Netanyahu issued the command: "Remember what Amalek has done to you, we have been commanded. And we do remember." In so doing, he invoked the Biblical reference: "Now go, attack Amalek, and destroy all that they have, and spare no one; but kill both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."

One year later, the promise by Israeli leaders to destroy Gaza has been fulfilled. The Strip is now a wasteland of rubble and human remains, where survivors, men and women, children and the elderly, struggle to hold on to life amid deprivation and disease. Israeli bombs have spared no one, not journalists, students, scholars, doctors, nurses, babies, pregnant women, persons with disabilities, civil servants, people seeking food and safety or humanitarian workers, including UN staff. Entire families have been exterminated and generations erased, with millions of lives torn apart.

Nearly all those surviving are displaced, trapped in ever-shrinking parts of the tiny territory, corralled into crowded camps and shelters with nowhere to flee. Constant bombing has turned humanitarian zones into killing fields.

The enhanced siege, restrictions on aid and relentless targeting of homes and key civilian infrastructure have led to starvation at an unprecedented pace. The decimation of health infrastructure has made preventable diseases incurable and accelerated the spread of illness and epidemics, while the massive destruction of educational, cultural and heritage institutions and the land itself deeply jeopardises Palestinian culture, national identity and existence on the land.

Meanwhile, as the world watches the people of Gaza live in constant terror of impending annihilation, broadcast and shared on social media, a deliberate pattern of conduct threatening the extinction of Palestinians through mass displacement, death, destruction and annexation of land is emerging in the West Bank, including east Jerusalem.

Nothing can justify these acts. For a year, we have implored States to intervene, in line with their moral and legal obligations to prevent these atrocities and preserve the international legal system, human rights and humanity. Our calls have gone largely unheeded, together with those of millions of people worldwide who have

used their platforms to advocate for an end to the violence, and who continue to face repressive tactics to silence and punish their voices, in several countries.

The international legal order is breaking down in the face of these atrocities. The International Criminal Court Prosecutor's [application for arrest warrants](#) remains outstanding without a timely decision by the Court while a genocidal campaign rages. [Provisional measures](#) ordered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to prevent genocidal acts and preserve evidence of crimes committed in Gaza remain unfulfilled. The ICJ [Advisory Opinion](#) declaring Israel's occupation unlawful, and amounting to racial segregation and apartheid, followed by a widely supported [General Assembly resolution](#), remains to be implemented. Defiant in the face of overwhelming public sentiment across the international community, Israel continues to act with brazen disregard for international law and order.

The international community's failure to secure a ceasefire and hold accountable all those responsible for or complicit in heinous crimes, has not only enabled the continuation of unprecedented brutality but widened it to the broader region, setting Lebanon ablaze with violence and destruction.

This spiral of destruction must end. The international community must act with utmost urgency to change the trajectory of violence if we are to avert a full-scale conflagration with unthinkable consequences, most egregiously for the children.

We call on all leaders to move beyond dehumanising and polarising narratives, and actively work for an [immediate cessation of all hostilities and crimes](#) in Palestine/Israel and the region, for the immediate release of all persons arbitrarily detained, both Israelis held in Gaza and Palestinians held by Israel.

We call for immediate provision of life-saving humanitarian assistance to all affected people and for such access to be guaranteed by the international community.

We honour all victims, recent and past. Our societies must allow space to process the immense toll of collective grief and trauma, within those peoples most deeply affected by this, and in communities across the globe who have borne witness and taken action. We must try to move forward together. We extend a heartfelt appeal to the Israeli people, acknowledging their deep trauma and pain, and seeking their support in fostering change and working together to bring an end to the violence against and suffering of the Palestinian people.

We demand that everyone, state actors and individuals alike, prioritise respect for international law and human rights without discrimination and double standards.

The world must swiftly reorient its moral compass toward justice and freedom for all and recommit to international peace, which will never be achieved until everyone, including Palestinians and Israelis, are afforded the chance to live in equal dignity and freedom.

XIV. WFP warns escalating violence in northern Gaza is having a disastrous impact on food security for thousands of families

On 12 October, World Food Programme's Country Director for Palestine, Antoine Renard, issued the following [statement](#).

The UN World Food Programme today warned that escalating violence in northern Gaza is having a disastrous impact on food security for thousands of Palestinian families, noting that the main crossings into the north have been closed and no food aid has entered since 1 October.

Food distribution points, as well as kitchens and bakeries in North Gaza, have been forced to shut down due to airstrikes, military ground operations and evacuation orders. The only functioning bakery in North Gaza, supported by WFP, caught fire after being hit by an explosive munition.

“The north is basically cut off and we’re not able to operate there,” said Antoine Renard, WFP Country Director for Palestine. “WFP has been on the ground since the onset of the crisis. We are committed to delivering life-saving food every day despite the mounting challenges, but without safe and sustained access, it is virtually impossible to reach the people in need.”

WFP’s last remaining food supplies in the north, including canned food, wheat flour, high-energy biscuits, and nutrition supplements, have been distributed to shelters, health facilities and kitchens in Gaza City and three shelters in North Gaza. If the conflict continues to escalate at the current scale, it is unclear how long these limited food supplies will last and the consequences for fleeing families will be dire. The rapid deterioration in the north comes as aid entering Gaza overall is at its lowest level in months, and commercial goods are barely trickling in. WFP has been able to bring in only four percent of the food needed to sustain a million people in Gaza this month. As a result, no one in Gaza this month has received the more substantial WFP food parcels typically distributed. These parcels, containing pasta, rice, oil and canned meat, are a lifeline for many families.

“If we cannot get more aid into and across Gaza, we won’t be able to deliver food parcels to more than a million Palestinians in Gaza,” said Renard. “People have run out of ways to cope, food systems have collapsed, and the risk of famine is real.”

In southern and central Gaza, the situation is also at a breaking point due to insecurity surrounding the crossing points. There are no food distributions, and bakeries are struggling to secure wheat flour, which puts them at risk of shutting down any day. A few hot meal kitchens are still providing one meal for those fortunate enough to access them.

As winter approaches, Gazans find themselves without adequate shelter, no fuel and very little aid. WFP urgently needs safe and sustained access to deliver life-saving food assistance. This requires more crossing points open to move food into Gaza, and security for our staff and partners who are working tirelessly to safely deliver food to those urgently in need.

XV. UN Humanitarian Coordinator sounds alarm that civilians in northern Gaza cut off from supplies critical for survival

On 13 October, Muhannad Hadi, the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, made the following [statement](#).

The pressure on over 400,000 people remaining in northern Gaza to leave southwards is mounting.

Since 1 October 2024, Israeli authorities have increasingly cut off northern Gaza from essential supplies. Erez and Erez West crossings have been kept closed, and no essentials have been allowed from the south. Three renewed orders have been issued, on 7, 9 and 12 October, directing people’s displacement. In parallel, hostilities continue to escalate, resulting in more civilian suffering and casualties.

In the past two weeks, over 50,000 people have been displaced from the Jabalya area, which is cut off, while others remain stranded in their homes amid increased bombardment and fighting. A military siege that deprives civilians of essential means of survival is unacceptable.

The latest military operations in northern Gaza have forced the closure of water wells, bakeries, medical points and shelters, as well as the suspension of protection services, malnutrition treatment, and temporary learning spaces. At the same time, hospitals have seen an influx of trauma injuries.

Civilians must be protected, and their basic needs must be met. Multiple entry routes must open for critical supplies and safe humanitarian response needs to be provided to people in need wherever they are. Civilians must not be forced to choose between displacement and starvation. They must have a safe place to go, with

shelter, food, medicine and water. In Gaza, there are no more supplies available to support newly displaced people.

Those who leave must be given the opportunity to return. I reiterate that international humanitarian law must always be respected by all.

XVI. OHCHR is appalled at the desperate situation in northern Gaza

On 14 October, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) issued the following [press release](#).

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is appalled by Israel's continued bombing and other attacks on parts of North Gaza, where its forces have trapped tens of thousands of Palestinians, including civilians, in their homes and shelters with no access to food or other life-sustaining necessities. In the shadow of the escalation of hostilities across the Middle East, the Israeli military appears to be cutting off North Gaza completely from the rest of the Gaza Strip and conducting hostilities with absolute disregard for the lives and security of Palestinian civilians.

For the eighth consecutive day, the Israeli military continued heavy strikes in North Gaza. While repeatedly ordering residents to move to the south of Gaza, on 9 October, Israeli troops reportedly erected sand mounds and blocks at the Abu Sharekh roundabout, the critical junction for those trying to move between North Gaza and Gaza City, in the northern part of Gaza, effectively sealing off North Gaza and reportedly attacked those trying to flee. On 9 October, the Israeli military reportedly struck a group of people in the vicinity of Abu Sharakh roundabout, killing a photojournalist and injuring another. According to reports received by the office, on 10 October at around noon, the Israeli military again fired on people near the Abu Sharakh roundabout, killing several Palestinians and injuring others.

At the same time, attacks on schools serving as shelters for IDPs in Jabalya in North Gaza have continued, almost daily, demonstrating disregard for the lives of Palestinian civilians. The Gaza Civil Defense has, in many cases, been unable to reach Palestinians pleading for rescue, partially due to lack of fuel and equipment, exacerbated by the reported destruction of one of their two remaining stations in the entire North Gaza governorate.

The separation of North Gaza raises further concerns that Israel does not intend to allow civilians to return to their homes, and the repeated calls for all Palestinians to leave northern Gaza raise grave concerns of large-scale forced transfer of the civilian population. Shooting at civilians would amount to war crime, including when they are fleeing in response to an order to evacuate.

Israel, as the occupying power, has the obligation to ensure food, water, medical care and other basic necessities for civilians in Gaza, including by complying with its duty to ensure public order and civil life. The denial of entry of sufficient goods necessary for the survival of the civilian population into northern Gaza and the refusal or failure by Israel to provide these essentials, especially following more than a year of existing unlawful impediments to humanitarian assistance, will inevitably lead to further unnecessary suffering and deaths.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reminds Israel that the forcible transfer of the population of North Gaza would amount to a war crime and may amount to other atrocity crimes, as would shooting at civilians fleeing hostilities in response to their orders, and demands an immediate end to the siege of northern Gaza, the repeated bombing of IDP shelters and a public confirmation to its troops that civilians who are not directly participating in hostilities may never be targeted.

XVII. UN Emergency Relief Coordinator warns Security Council brutal reality in Gaza worsening by the day

On 16 October, Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Joyce Msuya [briefed](#) the Security Council.

Since we last briefed the Council on 9 October, just one week ago, the people of Gaza have suffered multiple mass casualty incidents due to Israeli airstrikes. In just one week, nearly 400 Palestinians have reportedly been killed in Gaza and almost 1,500 injured. The world has seen the images of patients and displaced persons, sheltering near Al Aqsa hospital, burning alive.

Scores of others, including women and children, are suffering the excruciating pain of severe lifechanging burns. There is no way to get them the urgent care they need to survive and manage such injuries. If such horror does not awaken our sense of humanity and propel us to action, what will?

Some 20 families lost both their shelter and belongings in the fire. Just hours before, a strike on a school serving as a shelter in Nuseirat killed more than 20 people and injured scores of others, according to local sources.

Israel's military offensive is intensifying in the north. Heavy fighting in and around Jabaliya, which is under siege, continues to be reported, as does indiscriminate rocket fire by Palestinian armed groups toward Israel.

Since the beginning of October, we estimate that over 55,000 people have been displaced from the Jabaliya area, while others remain stranded in their homes with water and food running out.

Thirteen members of a family were killed yesterday after rescue workers were again prevented from reaching the wounded trapped under the rubble who were calling for help after their home was hit. The images emerging from the camp show a traumatized population, running for their lives, with no safe place to go.

Only three of the ten hospitals in North Gaza Governorate are now operational, and those only at minimum capacity. The facilities are facing dire shortages of fuel, blood, trauma treatment and medications.

Women are giving birth under heavy bombardment. For the 155,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women in Gaza, it is an exhausting and traumatizing experience, not knowing where and how to give birth, or whether their child will survive. There is no antenatal care. There is no medication. And then there is hunger. Some 11,000 pregnant women are suffering hunger and malnutrition, putting not just their lives at risk, but also the lives of their newborn babies.

On 12 October, an inter-agency team, from the United Nations, an international, non-governmental organization and the Palestine Red Crescent Society, was finally able to reach the Kamal Adwan and Al-Sahaba hospitals in northern Gaza, after nine separate attempts where they were denied or impeded by Israeli forces. Nine.

The team eventually transferred more than a dozen critical patients from Kamal Adwan to Al-Shifa hospital. Additional patients and their companions, who had earlier been transferred to Kamal Adwan from Al-Awda Hospital, were also taken to Al Shifa.

The team delivered fuel to keep Kamal Adwan and Al-Awda functioning, as well as fuel and blood units to Al-Sahaba Hospital. But humanitarian aid cannot be provided in one-off batches. The World Health Organization has warned that Kamal Adwan hospital is overwhelmed, receiving between 50 and 70 newly injured patients each day.

These missions were completed amid fierce ongoing hostilities. Drivers from the United Nations and the Palestine Red Crescent Society were subjected to humiliating treatment during security screening and temporary detention at a checkpoint.

Medical staff kept one child alive by hand pumping oxygen for over seven hours until they made it through the checkpoint. This gives just a glimpse of the daily work of humanitarians in Gaza.

No food aid entered northern Gaza from October 2 to October 15, when a trickle was allowed in, and all essential supplies for survival are running out. Distributions of existing food supplies to people in need continue, but these stocks are quickly dwindling.

In Gaza city, more than 110,000 meals are distributed each day by at least 10 kitchens, including to support an influx of people displaced from North Gaza Governorate.

In North Gaza Governorate, between 11 and 13 October, our partners distributed more than 1,500 food parcels and 1,500 bags of wheat flour to displaced people who were trapped or sheltering in and near schools in Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahya.

However, there is now barely any food left to distribute, and most bakeries will be forced to shut down again in the next several days without additional fuel.

Given the abject conditions and intolerable suffering in north Gaza, the fact that humanitarian access is nearly non-existent is unconscionable.

During the first two weeks of October, just one out of 54 coordinated movements to the north via the Al Rashid checkpoint was facilitated by Israeli authorities, while another four were impeded but eventually accomplished. Eighty-five percent of the movements were denied, and the rest were impeded or canceled, due to security or logistical issues.

Throughout Gaza, less than a third of the 286 humanitarian missions coordinated with Israeli authorities in the first two weeks of October were facilitated without major incidents or delays. Every time a mission is impeded, the lives of people in need and humanitarians on the ground are put at even greater risk. This woeful and unacceptable trend must change.

Thankfully, since we last briefed the Council, the second round of the polio vaccination campaign began in central Gaza. WHO reports that on 14 and 15 October, nearly 157,000 children under 10 received the vaccination. The campaign once again underscored the critical role of UNRWA, whose teams vaccinated 43 per cent of the children reached on the first day.

It is now critical that the parties continue to respect the agreed humanitarian pauses and that access be granted throughout Gaza to ensure that we can reach all children in need of the vaccine, including in the north. As we have previously said, the success of the polio campaign shows what can be achieved when obstacles to humanitarian access are removed.

The level of suffering in Gaza defies our ability to capture it in words, or even to comprehend its scale. Reality is brutal in Gaza and it gets worse every day, as the bombs continue to fall, as fierce fighting continues unabated, and as supplies essential for people's survival and humanitarian assistance are blocked at every turn.

International humanitarian law must be respected and this Council, and all Member States, must exert all their influence to ensure it. Civilians must be protected, and their essential needs must be met, whether they move or stay. Civilians must be allowed to seek protection elsewhere, and they must be guaranteed the right to voluntarily return, as international law demands.

The wounded and sick must receive the care they need, and hospitals and medical personnel must be protected. Humanitarian operations must be facilitated both into and throughout Gaza, including to the north, to reach all civilians in need.

Hostages must be immediately released, and, until they are, they must be allowed visits by the International Committee of the Red Cross. Indiscriminate rocket fire towards Israel must stop. The provisional orders and

determinations of the International Court of Justice must be respected. There must be accountability for international crimes.

The atrocities in Gaza must end, but this cannot happen through words; it must happen through action, urgent, unequivocal action.

We renew our call for urgent diplomatic efforts from across the international community to de-escalate the situation, ensure respect for international law, achieve an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and agree a path towards sustainable peace. Thank you.

XVIII. Israel must stop violent settler attacks on Palestinian olive farmers: UN human rights experts

On 16 October, Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation; Geneviève Savigny (Chair-Rapporteur), Carlos Duarte, Uche Ewelukwa, Shalmali Guttal, Davit Hakobyan, Working Group on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas; Paula Gaviria Betancur, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons; Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing; Cecilia M Bailliet, Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity; 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 issued the following [press release](#).

Palestinian farmers in Israeli-occupied West Bank are facing the most dangerous olive season ever, UN experts said today.

The intimidation of farmers, restriction of access to lands, severe harassment and attacks by Israeli armed settlers and occupation forces further undermine the food sovereignty of Palestinian families and are yet another attack on Palestinian self-determination, the experts warned.

“In 2023, the harvest was marred by a sharp increase in movement restrictions and violence by Israeli forces and settlers,” the experts said. “Last year, Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, faced the highest level of Israeli settler violence, including settlers physically assaulting Palestinians, setting fire or damaging their property and crops, stealing sheep, blocking them from accessing their land, water and grazing areas, causing a record number of Palestinians to be displaced after being forced to leave their homes and lands. Last year, Israel also seized more Palestinian land than in any year in the past 30 years.”

“The olive harvest is central to Palestinian life and culture. The Palestinian people’s relationship to olive trees, which can live for hundreds of years, is also about their relationship to their ancestors and to their future,” the experts said. “Restricting olive harvests, destroying orchards and banning access to water sources is an attempt by Israel to expand its illegal settlements.”

Palestinian farmers, who rely heavily on the olive harvest for their livelihood, face enormous challenges, threats and harassment in accessing their olive trees. In 2023, more than 96,000 dunums of olive-cultivated land across the occupied West Bank remained unharvested due to Israeli-imposed restrictions, resulting in the loss of 1,200 metric tons of olive oil, amounting to US\$10 million.

“This situation is expected to worsen as Israeli authorities have increasingly revoked or failed to issue “prior coordination” permits, which are necessary for farmers to access their lands in certain areas,” the experts warned. “During the 2023 season, nearly all of these approvals were cancelled, and agricultural gates along the West Bank Barrier were largely closed, further obstructing access.”

They urged Israeli forces to refrain from interfering with this year's olive harvest, and concentrate their efforts on withdrawing the occupation and dismantling the colonies, as stated by the [International Court of Justice on 19 July 2024](#) and reaffirmed by the General Assembly on 18 September 2024.

“Israel is under international legal obligation to first and foremost end their occupation of Palestinian land, which amounts to annexation including through racial segregation and apartheid, immediately cease all new settlement activities and evacuate all settlers from the occupied Palestinian territory. It is also under the obligation to provide full reparation for the damage caused by its human rights violations to all persons concerned, including by returning land, and allowing displaced Palestinians to return to their homes,” they said.

The experts said they were following the situation closely and will continue to call for protection, including through a foreign presence acting as a buffer between the Palestinians and their aggressors, and to protect Palestinian farmers and their families.

The Special Rapporteur on the right to food will be presenting his thematic report “[Starvation and the right to food, with an emphasis on the Palestinian people's food sovereignty](#)” to the General Assembly on 18 October.

XIX. UN Commission of Inquiry says international law obligates the UN, Member States, and international organizations to end Israel's unlawful occupation

On 18 October, the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Israel, published a [legal position paper](#) on the implementation of the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on the Legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The [press release](#) is reproduced below.

All States and international organizations, including the United Nations, have obligations under international law to bring to an end Israel's unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel said in a new legal [position paper](#) published today.

The paper sets forth the Commission's views in relation to state responsibility and how the General Assembly and the Security Council can identify and implement the precise modalities and actions required to the occupation to an end, as rapidly as possible.

The Commission found that the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the [Legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem](#) is authoritative and unambiguous in stating that Israel's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is unlawful under international law.

“The Commission has always stated that the root cause of the protracted conflict and cycles of violence is the occupation,” said Navi Pillay, Chair of the Commission. “The Commission concluded in its report to the General Assembly in 2022, that the occupation is unlawful under international law. The Commission welcomed the historic advisory opinion from the highest court in the United Nations system.”

The Commission's paper sets forth the obligations for Israel, third States and the United Nations to bring to an end the unlawful occupation. Israel must immediately put into place a comprehensive plan of action to dismantle settlements and evacuate all settlers from occupied territory. Israel must return land, title and natural resources to the displaced Palestinians, and repeal all restrictive and discriminatory law and policies.

“Israel's internationally wrongful acts give rise to State responsibility, not only for Israel, but for all States.” Pillay said. “All States are obligated not to recognize territorial or sovereignty claims made by Israel over the occupied territories. States must distinguish in their dealings between Israel and the Occupied Palestinian

Territory, such as a State must not recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel or place its diplomatic representatives to Israel in Jerusalem. States must not render aid or assistance in maintaining the unlawful occupation. Aid and assistance include financial, military and political aid or support.”

“It is incumbent on all States to work cooperatively in order bring the unlawful occupation to an end, and to work towards the full realization of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination,” Pillay said. The Commission also calls on all States to implement the General Assembly resolution passed on 13 September 2024.

XX. FAO: The risk of famine remains high across the entire Gaza Strip

On 17 October, the Food and Agriculture Organization issued the following [press release](#).

One year into the conflict, the risk of famine remains high across the whole Gaza Strip with more people likely to fall into severe hunger as conflict intensifies and winter approaches, according to [a new report](#) published by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) global initiative.

The new data reveals that about 1.84 million people across the Gaza Strip are experiencing extremely critical levels of acute food insecurity due to ongoing fighting, which has already displaced nearly 2 million people, destroyed [70 percent of crop fields](#), decimated livelihoods and local food production systems, resulted in collapse of health services and severely restricted humanitarian access and commercial activities. Acute malnutrition is also at serious levels, ten times higher than before the escalation of hostilities.

A minor reduction in the severity of food insecurity seen in the current period of analysis (September - October 2024) is largely attributed to the surge in humanitarian assistance in North Gaza, Gaza city, Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis governorates between May and August 2024. This slight improvement will be short-lived considering the ongoing fighting and the clampdown on humanitarian and commercial activities observed since September, which will likely see an increase in the number of people suffering from severe food insecurity and acute malnutrition during the winter.

According to the new IPC report, around 133,000 people or 6 percent of the population are now experiencing catastrophic food insecurity (IPC Phase 5, Catastrophe). This number is expected to rise to about 345,000 people or 16 percent of the entire population, between November 2024 and April 2025.

Winter planting season is crucial

FAO’s priority now is to reactivate local food production and restore the availability of highly nutritious food in Gaza, particularly in view of the upcoming winter season which is characterized by colder temperatures and increased rainfall, typically resulting in a deterioration in the food security and nutrition situation across the Gaza Strip.

Like other United Nations and humanitarian actors, FAO has experienced logistical and security challenges, particularly due to the restrictions at crossings, and the collapse of law and order inside Gaza, that constrains the delivery of vital agricultural aid. Severe shortages of agricultural inputs significantly hinder local production efforts, making meaningful planting and agricultural activities nearly impossible.

“To curb acute hunger and malnutrition, we must act now, immediately cease hostilities, restore humanitarian access to deliver critical and essential food aid and agricultural inputs in time for the upcoming winter crop planting season which has already started, to allow them to grow food,” said FAO Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol.

“Humanitarian aid alone is not enough. People need fresh, nutritious food. To make a difference, we also need to support farmers to continue and restart the production of food, as well as the flow of imported food and non-food items,” she added.

Keeping livestock alive

FAO is deeply concerned about significant livestock losses, which are indispensable for the livelihoods and the survival of people in Gaza. One of the Organization’s key priorities is to protect 30,000 sheep and goats, representing about 40 percent of the total estimated to be alive. By nourishing these animals, enough milk can be provided for all of Gaza’s children.

As of 29 September 2024, FAO has distributed fodder to over 4 400 livestock holders in Rafah, Khan Younis, and Deir al-Balah, and veterinary kits to about 2 400 herder families.

FAO stands ready to deliver more essential supplies, additional fodder, greenhouse plastic sheets, plastic water tanks, vaccines, energy blocks, and animal shelters, once access, security, and mobility conditions are restored.

Under the latest UN Flash Appeal for the period of April to December 2024, FAO is seeking around \$40 million to provide immediate and emergency assistance, including distributing animal feed and health inputs, replacing livestock that have died, and offering support to vulnerable farmers and livestock herders in both Gaza and the West Bank. So far, FAO managed to secure approximately \$2.25 million.

XXI. UNICEF warns near-blockade of aid and access in northern Gaza cut off hundreds of thousands of children and families from vital aid

On 18 October, the Deputy Executive Director for Humanitarian Action and Supply Operations of the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF), Ted Chaiban, issued the following [statement](#).

The situation in northern Gaza is extremely grave. Renewed mass forced displacement, increased conflict, and ongoing military obstruction that amounts to an effective blockade has cut off hundreds of thousands of children and families from vital humanitarian aid.

The number of aid trucks entering the north has reduced to an unacceptable trickle, pushing an already weakened population into deeper suffering. Since early October, only 80 trucks have been able to reach northern Gaza, compared to over 460 trucks during the same period in September, a catastrophic decline in humanitarian access for the 400,000 people trapped in the north, most of whom are children and women.

The stories emerging from the ground are haunting and heartbreaking. Families are running out of food, water is critically scarce, and basic sanitation and hygiene supplies are no longer available. Tragic reports of children burned, killed, and maimed. Acute malnutrition in northern Gaza has reached alarming levels, and over 2,000 children who were receiving treatment might have had their care interrupted. Every missed day of treatment could be fatal.

The latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis confirms our worst fears for children in northern Gaza. Nearly 1 in 5 children suffer from wasting, the most life-threatening form of malnutrition. This is due to the prolonged deprivation of food, water, and essential aid, including foods and nutrition supplements for young children. If the intense fighting, forced displacement, and continued blockage of humanitarian assistance persist, the risk of famine will escalate rapidly in the coming months.

This looming disaster could lead to the loss of countless young lives unless immediate and unhindered humanitarian access is granted to deliver life-saving support. The world must act now to prevent this catastrophe from becoming a full-scale famine.

Last month I was in Gaza and heard first-hand from hospital staff, including in Kamal Adwan, the only facility in the north with a pediatric unit, where critically ill children are being treated in increasingly desperate conditions. Newborns in incubators, children with life-threatening conditions, and patients in intensive care remain at severe risk as medical supplies run out and the hospital struggles to function without fuel or clean water.

The trauma these children are enduring is unimaginable. Many have been displaced multiple times, forced to flee their homes again and again with nowhere safe to go. Children with disabilities or medical conditions are particularly vulnerable, facing life-threatening risks as the conflict intensifies. For these children, the lack of safe shelter, medical care, and basic supplies is nothing short of a nightmare.

The blockade has also brought commercial traffic to a near halt, there is no market left in the north. Humanitarian aid alone cannot meet the needs of an entire population, children and families must have access to goods through commercial channels to survive.

UNICEF is calling for the immediate lifting of aid restrictions in northern Gaza, the resumption of commercial traffic, the approval of additional routes for the safe transport of cargo, the protection of humanitarian workers, and for unhindered access for humanitarian aid. The restrictions on aid must be removed to ensure that children can receive the food, water, soap, and medical care they desperately need. Without immediate action, we risk losing an entire generation to preventable causes, starvation, disease, and a lack of basic health services.

Finally, beyond the entry of trucks and access to the north of Gaza, UNICEF needs the Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to remain on the ground as the indispensable and irreplaceable arm of the humanitarian response. Since the onset of conflict over a year ago, UNRWA has been crucial in delivering lifesaving aid to the Palestinian population, who are heavily dependent on its services.

Failure means abandoning children in Gaza to an unimaginable fate. Time is running out, but we can still act.

XXII. UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process condemns ongoing attacks on civilians in Gaza

On 20 October, the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, issued the following [statement](#).

The nightmare in Gaza is intensifying. Horrifying scenes are unfolding in the northern Strip amidst conflict, relentless Israeli strikes and an ever-worsening humanitarian crisis.

In Beit Lahia last night, dozens were reportedly killed in Israeli airstrikes. This follows weeks of intensified operations resulting in scores of civilian fatalities and near total lack of humanitarian aid reaching populations in the north.

Nowhere is safe in Gaza.

I condemn the continuing attacks on civilians. This war must end, the hostages held by Hamas must be freed, the displacement of Palestinians must cease, and civilians must be protected wherever they are. Humanitarian aid must be delivered unimpeded.

The path ahead will require courage, political will and renewed dialogue. We owe it to the families suffering in Gaza and Israel. The war must stop now.

XXIII. Intense bombardments, mass displacements, and lack of access in northern Gaza force postponement of polio vaccination - UNICEF

On 23 October, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Middle East and North Africa Regional Office issued the following [statement](#).

Due to the escalating violence, intense bombardment, mass displacement orders, and lack of assured humanitarian pauses across most of northern Gaza, the Polio Technical Committee for Gaza, including the Palestinian Ministry of Health, World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) and partners have been compelled to postpone the third phase of the polio vaccination campaign, which was set to begin today. This final phase of the ongoing campaign aimed to vaccinate 119,279 children across northern Gaza.

The current conditions, including ongoing attacks on civilian infrastructure continue to jeopardize people's safety and movement in northern Gaza, making it impossible for families to safely bring their children for vaccination, and health workers to operate.

All logistics, supplies and trained human resources were prepared to vaccinate children across northern Gaza with a second dose of novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2), following a first round conducted across the Gaza Strip from 1-12 September 2024. However, given that the area currently approved for temporary humanitarian pauses was substantially reduced, now limited only to Gaza City, a significant decrease from the first round, many children in northern Gaza would have missed out on the polio vaccine dose.

To interrupt poliovirus transmission, at least 90% of all children in every community and neighborhood must be vaccinated, a prerequisite for an effective campaign to interrupt the outbreak and prevent its further spread. Humanitarian pauses are essential for its success, allowing partners to deliver vaccination supplies to health facilities, families to safely access vaccination sites, and mobile teams of health workers to reach children in their communities. A delay in administering a second dose of nOPV2 within six weeks reduces the impact of two closely spaced rounds on concurrently boosting the immunity of all children and interrupting poliovirus transmission. Having a significant number of children miss out on their second vaccine dose will seriously jeopardize efforts to stop the transmission of poliovirus in Gaza. This could also lead to further spread of poliovirus in the Gaza Strip and neighboring countries, with the risk of more children being paralyzed.

Since the rollout of the second round of the polio campaign in Gaza on 14 October 2024, 442,855 children under ten years have been successfully vaccinated in central and south of the Gaza Strip, 94% of the target in these areas. A total of 357,802 children between two to ten years received vitamin A supplements as part of efforts to integrate the delivery of polio vaccine with other essential health services in Gaza.

It is imperative to stop the polio outbreak as soon as possible, before more children are paralyzed and poliovirus spreads further. It is crucial therefore that the vaccination campaign in northern Gaza is facilitated through the implementation of the humanitarian pauses, ensuring access for wherever eligible children are located. WHO and UNICEF urge all parties to ensure that civilians, health workers, and civilian infrastructure, such as schools, shelters, hospitals, are protected and renew their call for an immediate ceasefire.

XXIV. UN Human Rights High Commissioner says world must act as darkest moment of conflict unfolds in northern Gaza

On 25 October, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, issued the following [press release](#).

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk said today the darkest moment of the Gaza conflict is unfolding in the north of the Strip, where the Israeli military is effectively subjecting an entire population to bombing, siege and

risk of starvation, as well as being forced to choose between mass displacement and being trapped in an active conflict zone.

He called on the world's leaders to act, saying States have a duty under the Geneva Conventions to ensure respect for international humanitarian law.

“The bombing in North Gaza is non-stop,” he said. “The Israeli military has ordered hundreds of thousands to move, with no guarantees of return. But there is no safe way to leave: the bombs continue to fall; the Israeli military is separating families and detaining many people; and people fleeing have been reportedly shot at.

“Unimaginably, the situation is getting worse by the day. The Israeli Government's policies and practices in northern Gaza risk emptying the area of all Palestinians. We are facing what could amount to atrocity crimes, including potentially extending to crimes against humanity.”

Türk said Palestinian armed groups also reportedly continue to operate amongst civilians, including in places of shelter, putting civilians in harm's way, which is totally unacceptable.

“There is extremely limited access to this part of Gaza,” the High Commissioner added. “Next to no aid has reached the area in weeks, with unlawful restrictions remaining, and many are now facing starvation.

“The Israeli military is striking hospitals, and staff and patients have been killed and injured or forced to evacuate simultaneously. Shelters, once schools, are struck daily. Communication with the outside world remains extremely limited. Journalists continue to be killed.”

Already over 150,000 people are reportedly dead, wounded or missing in Gaza. “My gravest fear is, given the intensity, breadth, scale and blatant nature of the Israeli operation currently underway in North Gaza, that number will rise dramatically,” he said.

“I have repeatedly expressed alarm at the methods and means of warfare, and the gravity of the violations committed by all sides.”

He said the International Court of Justice has also been clear on Israel's obligation to ensure entry and delivery of humanitarian aid, and to this effect has issued binding orders to ensure Israel conforms with its obligations under the Genocide Convention.

“Under the Geneva Conventions, States have an obligation to act when a serious violation of international humanitarian law has been committed,” Türk said. “Under the Genocide Convention, State parties also have the responsibility to act to prevent such a crime, when risk becomes apparent.

“For months, I have pleaded with all parties to the conflict, as well as all States, particularly those with influence in the region, to act to stop the carnage and destruction, to ensure the prompt and unconditional release of all hostages, and to ensure international humanitarian and international human rights law are respected. But still this goes on and on and on.

“Now, the international rule of law is being progressively dismantled,” he added. “Either the world ashamedly fails those who so desperately need help, or we stand united and put a stop to this.

“To all the world's leaders, I remind you of your responsibility to ensure respect for international humanitarian law as set out in the Geneva Conventions. These are universally accepted and binding norms developed to preserve the very bare minimum of humanity. I implore you to put the protection of civilians and human rights first, and not to abandon that minimum of humanity.”

XXV. UNICEF warns children in Gaza face lethal delays in medical evacuations

On 25 October, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Spokesperson, James Elder, made the following [statement](#) at a press conference at the United Nations Office in Geneva.

Children are being medically evacuated from Gaza at a rate of fewer than one child per day. If this lethally slow pace continues, it would take more than seven years to evacuate the 2,500 children needing urgent medical care.

As a result, children in Gaza are dying, not just from the bombs, bullets and shells that strike them, but because, even when “miracles happen”, even when the bombs go off and the homes collapse and the casualties mount, *but* the children survive, they are then prevented from leaving Gaza to receive the urgent care that would save their lives.

This year, from 1 January to 7 May, an average of 296 children were medically evacuated each month. Since the Rafah crossing closed on 7 May due to the ground offensive there, the number of children medically evacuated has collapsed to just 22 per month.

That is, just 127 children, many suffering from head trauma, amputations, burns, cancer, and severe malnutrition, have been allowed to leave since Rafah closed.

One of the many tragedies of Gaza is that appalling figures have failed to stir those with power to act. Please then allow me to share with you a few of the children whose futures are bound by these crushing constraints. These are, sadly, by no means unique.

Mazyona. She's 12. When two rockets struck her home, she was thought dead. Mazyona had no pulse. Both her siblings, Hala, 13 and Mohamed, 10, were killed.

Mazyona sustained devastating injuries to her face, her face was nearly torn off. Surgeons have held the remaining structure together, but she urgently requires a medevac for specialized care and bone surgery. Mazyona also still has shrapnel in her neck. She is of course in immense pain, and her condition is worsening. The platinum surgically used to rebuild her face is coming out, and doctors have stated that she needs surgeries outside of Gaza to save her life. Mazyona has been denied medical evacuation four times. Authorities suggested that the medevac could proceed without Mazyona's mother accompanying her. However, when her father attempted to take the next steps, Mazyona was again denied.

Elia is 4 years old. Elia, her parents and siblings were sleeping in their home in Al Nussirat early last month when a shell fell on the neighbouring house, causing a large fire that engulfed their home.

Elia has fourth-degree burns. Her leg was amputated. Most recently, given delays in medical evacuation, doctors had to amputate fingers from Elia's right hand. Elia has been in hospital for 43 days.

When I met Elia earlier this month, her mother, Eslam, was in the bed beside her also with fourth-degree burns. She also needed urgent medical evacuation, both for her burns and severe blood poisoning. Her wounds were covered in fungus. Eslam was denied medical evacuation. She died two days ago, on Wednesday.

Since her mother's death, Elia has received approval for medical evacuation. No date was given. Given the number of cases, it is unlikely to happen soon. Doctors have said they fear they will soon have to amputate 4-year-old Elia's hand and her other leg if she is not medically evacuated.

Atef is 6 months old. He is battling muscle cancer and suffers from severe malnutrition. Atef has also had a kidney tube inserted due to complications, further worsening his fragile condition. However, despite the severity of this baby's situation, like so many thousands of children, suitable medical care is close by, though outside of Gaza.

Last month Atef's mother, Amal, was forced to evacuate from northern Gaza, carrying sick Atef in her arms, walking long distances under extreme circumstances just to reach Al Aqsa Hospital. Despite its size, Al Aqsa lacks the necessary resources to treat her son.

With no home to return to, Amal has set up a tent near the hospital, living in dangerous and polluted conditions. Every day, Atef's condition deteriorates, and he urgently needs medical evacuation to access specialized care. Atef is Amal's only child. She has been waiting for any news on her request for medical evacuation for two months.

It is not known how many child patients have been rejected for medevac. Only a list of approved patients is provided by Israel's COGAT, which controls Gaza's entry and exit points. The status of others is not shared. When a patient is denied, there is nothing that can be done. Trapped in the grip of an indifferent bureaucracy, children's pain is brutally compounded.

And so, Mazyona, her face shattered and siblings dead, or Amal, and her despair as her son dies from a treatable illness, receive the unthinkable news: 'No'. No treatment, no pain relief, no escape. COGAT does not provide reasons for refusals.

All of this unfolds amid relentless bombings, as Gaza's hospitals have been decimated, leaving them unable to care for the flood of child patients. Medical staff repeatedly report urgent shortages of essentials like needles, plaster, burn cream, IV fluids, and painkillers – along with critical items like wheelchairs, crutches, hearing aids, even batteries.

After more than a year of attempting to shed light on the atrocities being committed against children in Gaza, perhaps then it is this that is the clearest and most damning reality: children, deeply unwell children, are being denied the medical care that could save them in Gaza, and then prevented from leaving to places where help awaits. Children are thus being denied the medical care that is a basic human right, and those who barely survived ruthless bombings are condemned to die from their injuries.

This is not a logistical problem, we have the ability to safely transport these children out of Gaza. It is not a capacity problem, indeed, we were evacuating children at higher numbers just months ago. It is simply a problem that is being completely disregarded.

XXVI. Secretary-General, shocked by harrowing death, destruction in north Gaza 'in the name of humanity', calls for a ceasefire

On 27 October, the Spokesperson for United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres issued the following [statement](#).

The plight of Palestinian civilians trapped in North Gaza is unbearable. Just in the past few weeks, hundreds of people have been killed, according to Gaza's Ministry of Health, and more than 60,000 others have been forced to flee yet again, many fearing not being able to return.

The Secretary-General is shocked by the harrowing levels of death, injury and destruction in the north, with civilians trapped under rubble, the sick and wounded going without life-saving health care and families lacking food and shelter, amid reports of families being separated and many people detained.

Repeated efforts to deliver humanitarian supplies essential to survive, food, medicine and shelter, continue to be denied by the Israeli authorities, with few exceptions, putting countless lives in peril. The postponement of the final phase of the polio vaccination campaign in northern Gaza is putting the lives of thousands of children at risk.

The Secretary-General warns that the widespread devastation and deprivation resulting from Israel's military operations in North Gaza, especially around Jabalya, Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun, are making the conditions of life untenable for the Palestinian population there. This conflict continues to be waged with little regard for the requirements of international humanitarian law.

The Secretary-General underscores that the parties to the conflict must respect and protect civilians, including humanitarian workers and first responders whose vital work must be facilitated and protected, not impeded and jeopardized.

In the name of humanity, the Secretary-General reiterates his calls for an immediate ceasefire, the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, and accountability for crimes under international law.

XXVII. Secretary-General deeply concerned by Israeli legislation on UNRWA

On 28 October, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres issued the following [statement](#).

I am deeply concerned by the adoption today by the Knesset of Israel of two laws concerning the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which, if implemented, would likely prevent UNRWA from continuing its essential work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as mandated by the UN General Assembly.

UNRWA is the principal means by which essential assistance is supplied to Palestine refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. There is no alternative to UNRWA.

The implementation of the laws could have devastating consequences for Palestine refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which is unacceptable. I call on 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 those concerning privileges and immunities of the United Nations. National legislation cannot alter those obligations.

The implementation of these laws would be detrimental for the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and for peace and security in the region as a whole. As I said before, UNRWA is indispensable.

I am bringing this matter to the attention of the UN General Assembly, and will keep the Assembly closely informed as the situation develops.

XXVIII. UNRWA Commissioner-General alerts UNGA President that laws passed by Knesset jeopardize the Agency's ability to carry out mandate

On 29 October, UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini sent a [letter](#) to the President of the General Assembly, Philémon Yang reproduced below.

On 7 December 2023 and 22 February 2024, I wrote to the President of the General Assembly that UNRWA's ability to implement its mandate was under threat. Today, I must inform you that the Agency is under such physical, political, and operational attack, unprecedented in United Nations history – that implementation of its mandate may become impossible without decisive intervention by the General Assembly. The consequences for Palestinians, for Israel, and for the region will be grave.

The adoption today by the Knesset of two laws on UNRWA in effect denies the protections and means essential for UNRWA to operate, forbidding Israeli state officials from contact with UNRWA or its

representatives, and prohibiting UNRWA operations within what is referred to as the sovereign territory of the State of Israel.

The legislation comes after a year of blatant disregard for UNRWA staff lives, premises and humanitarian operations in Gaza, and after intense diplomatic campaigns by the Government of Israel targeting UNRWA's donors with disinformation to undermine funding. Israeli local authorities are also threatening to evict UNRWA from its headquarters in occupied East Jerusalem and replace it with settlements.

These developments risk the collapse of UNRWA's operations in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza, and severely undermine the overall UN Gaza humanitarian operation which relies on UNRWA's platform. In the absence of any viable alternative to the Agency, these measures will compound the suffering of Palestinians.

The situation in Gaza is beyond the diplomatic vocabulary of the General Assembly. After more than a year of the most intense bombardment of a civilian population since World War II, and the restriction of humanitarian aid far below minimum needs, the lives of Palestinians are shattered. More than 43,000 people are reported killed, the majority women and children. Nearly the entire population is displaced. Schools, universities, hospitals, places of worship, bakeries, water, sewage and electricity systems, roads and farmland have all been destroyed. The surviving population lives in the greatest indignity. In the North, the population is trapped, awaiting death by airstrikes or starvation.

Hostages taken from Israel continue to suffer in captivity, their families left in terrible distress. Violence is escalating in the West Bank, where the destruction of public infrastructure inflicts collective punishment on the civilian population. War has spilled over and intensified in Lebanon.

Dismantling UNRWA will have a catastrophic impact on the international response to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. It will also sabotage any chance of recovery. In the absence of a full-fledged public administration or state, no entity other than UNRWA can deliver education to 660,000 boys and girls. An entire generation of children will be sacrificed, with long-term risks of marginalization and extremism. In the West Bank, UNRWA's collapse would deprive Palestine Refugees of access to education and primary healthcare, greatly worsening an already unstable situation.

The political ramifications of UNRWA's collapse are disastrous, with dire consequences for international peace and security. The attacks on the Agency advance unilateral changes to the parameters of any future political solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict and harm Palestinians' right to self-determination and aspirations for a political solution.

The attacks will not terminate the refugee status of Palestinians, which exists independently of UNRWA's service provision, but will severely harm their lives and future.

Allegations concerning breaches of neutrality, such as misuse of the Agency by Palestinian militant groups, including Hamas, have been used to justify the actions against UNRWA. The April 2024 Independent Review of UNRWA's neutrality (the Colonna Report) noted the Agency's exceptionally difficult operating environment and found that UNRWA has a more robust neutrality framework than any comparable organization. The Agency continues to make every possible effort to implement the report's recommendations, including through a dedicated implementation team.

Notwithstanding these efforts, UNRWA – like comparable UN entities – does not have police, military or intelligence capabilities and must rely on Member States for protection and neutrality, especially in areas controlled by powerful militant groups. To this end, for over 15 years, UNRWA has shared annually the names of its staff with the Government of Israel. This includes the names of staff about whom the government never previously raised concerns but who have now been included in government lists alleging armed militancy. The Agency takes every allegation extremely seriously. It has sent repeated requests to the government – in March, April, May, and July – appealing for evidence to enable action. No response has been received. UNRWA is

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

Going forward, I hope the Government of Israel will engage with UNRWA senior management to address every allegation, so they are no longer a concern for the government or an obstacle to UNRWA.

The Agency is also under intense physical attack in Gaza. At least 237 UNRWA personnel have been killed. Over 200 premises have been damaged or destroyed, killing more than 560 people seeking UN protection. Dozens of UNRWA staff have been detained and report being tortured. The Agency has received allegations regarding the military use of its premises by Palestinian armed groups, including Hamas, and Israeli forces. Given that all of Gaza is an active combat zone mostly under evacuation orders, the Agency cannot possibly verify these allegations. There must be accountability through an independent investigation.

Today, even as we look into the faces of children in Gaza, some of whom we know will die tomorrow, the rules-based international order is crumbling in a repetition of the horrors that led to the establishment of the United Nations, and in violation of commitments to prevent their recurrence. The attacks on UNRWA are an integral part of this disintegration.

I believe UNRWA has delivered on its mandate to a standard far beyond anything that could be asked of any UN entity or staff. Gazans say UNRWA is the only pillar of their lives still standing. My staff has worked for 13 months without pause, in great danger, amid personal tragedies and family displacement. Teachers are managing shelters for tens of thousands. Primary healthcare staff are performing surgeries. Drivers are risking their lives each day to save people from starvation. Managers are making impossible life or death decisions. UNRWA has helped ensure Gaza's survival until now, sustaining hopes for a political solution. My staff has given far more than we have the right to ask of them.

Under such untenable conditions, I seek Member States' support, commensurate with the gravity of the situation and risks, to ensure the Agency's ability to fully implement the mandate conferred by the General Assembly, (Res. 302 (IV), 1949).

I await your urgent decision.

XXIX. Special Adviser on Prevention of Genocide urges diplomatic action to end hostilities, prioritize civilian protection, ensure humanitarian aid

On 29 October, the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, issued the following [statement](#).

The Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, calls to prioritize all possible diplomatic efforts to bring an end to the ongoing hostilities in the Middle East and to redouble all efforts to strengthen the protection of innocent civilian populations, as well as to ensure the delivery of the necessary humanitarian assistance to those in dire need of receiving it. The Special Adviser also reiterates her demand for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, for the full compliance by the parties at war with obligations under international law, as well as for accountability.

“While the drums of war keep beating, opportunities for peace must be explored and maximized to the highest possible extent. True leadership is demonstrated by those who end wars. Both sides to the conflict have lost people. Thousands of innocent civilians have been killed in a conflict for which they bear no responsibility. The risk of regional escalation is no longer a fear but a factual reality. This must stop. We know that wars end in negotiations. Dialogue must be accelerated and opportunities for peace strengthened and sustained. This is imperative and urgent,” emphasized the Special Adviser.

Special Adviser Wairimu Nderitu also calls for dialogue to be undertaken at all levels. “The existence of high-level political dialogue may sometimes obscure the fact that most armed conflict happens mainly within local communities. High-level dialogue remains essential, but dialogue to reduce tensions at the community level must also be prioritized,” stated the Special Adviser.

“A time comes when wars end. For the Middle East, this time has come. All sides have arrived at a mutually hurting stalemate. This is a time to enable relationships, create and build commonalities between groups, to tackle myths and stereotypes, rather than to reinforce and emphasize differences. This is a time for collaborative problem solving between warring parties, a time to transform conflict and guide the energy of conflict away from violence to ceasefires and peace agreements. This is a time for positive structural and relational changes to meet everyone’s basic needs.”

For this, the Special Adviser called on the people in the Middle East “to arrive at a profound recognition of the essential humanity of the other, their historical ties, and build a sense of mutuality and common purpose, which remains so necessary for the future generations to move forward together. Dialogue is not an end in itself but a means towards building a culture of peace based on shared needs for communal stability and safety. This task is enormous, and people on both sides are carrying deep hurt, yet this process must start now. This war must end now,” emphasized the Special Adviser.

Special Adviser Wairimu Nderitu also reiterates that her prevention mandate does not allow her to express a position on whether the crime of genocide or any other specific international crime has been committed, which can only be determined by a competent, independent and impartial court of law. In this respect, the Special Adviser reiterates her full respect to the ongoing proceedings at the International Court of Justice.

“When death and suffering unite victims, leaders in the region must respond by unequivocally advancing towards peace. This call remains urgent and requires all possible support. Nothing can return the lives of those who have perished in this conflict, but further violence can and must be prevented. Those waging war must understand that the only path to victory is the path to peace. Those seeking to build peace must be always supported. This is a call for action to all those in a position of influence, who must take a step forward now,” emphasized the Special Adviser.

XXX. UN Special Coordinator calls for immediate de-escalation of the conflict

On 29 October, the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, [briefed](#) the Security Council. The text is reproduced below.

We have now entered the second year of this horrific conflict, and the region is on the verge of yet another serious escalation. The violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and wider region shows no signs of abating.

Just yesterday in Gaza, Israeli forces struck a building in Beit Lahiya, leaving at least 60 Palestinians killed, including at least 25 children, according to preliminary figures provided by the Gaza Ministry of Health. This strike is yet another in a deadly series of recent mass casualty incidents in the northern part of the Gaza Strip.

We are witnessing not only a horrific humanitarian nightmare, but a rapidly accelerated unraveling of the prospects for a sustainable resolution to this conflict.

Last week, I was again in the Gaza Strip and what I witnessed defies imagination.

In the southern part of the Strip, I saw the sheer magnitude of the devastation this war has inflicted on the population. I saw the immense destruction – of residential buildings, roads, hospitals, and schools. I saw thousands living in makeshift tents, with nowhere else to go as winter is approaching. Let me add, Mr President,

anecdotally, that on the way from the crossing into Gaza up to the Japanese health compound, I could only count two buildings that were not totally or partly destroyed.

I spoke to our UN colleagues and their humanitarian partners, who face increasing challenges in their tireless efforts to deliver vital assistance. They described the dire humanitarian situation in northern Gaza, which has received virtually no humanitarian assistance since the start of October.

I heard also from Palestinian NGOs, whose demands were very clear: The war must end. Civilians must be protected, and they must be able to access assistance to meet their basic needs. And even in the face of just trying to survive, they recognized that there must be a political solution to the conflict and an end to the occupation.

In Israel, I have also heard the cries of victims. The seventh of this month was a grim marker of Hamas' horrific attack in Israel that terrorized the population and marked a year of captivity for hostages still held in Gaza, in unbearable conditions, denied ICRC visits and their fates unknown. For them, as well, this nightmare must end, and the hostages must be freed.

We are also at the most dangerous juncture in the Middle East in decades.

You were briefed yesterday by my colleague on the serious escalations between Iran and Israel this month.

Meanwhile, the hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel are inflicting civilian casualties, massive displacement and destruction on both sides of the Blue Line. Armed groups operating from Yemen, Iraq and Syria also continued to launch missiles and projectiles toward Israel. Israel has reportedly carried out dozens of airstrikes in Syria in the past month.

Every effort, by all of us, must be made to de-escalate the situation and establish a different trajectory toward greater peace and stability in the region. We need a ceasefire. We need the hostages released from Gaza now. I urge all parties to engage constructively in urgent diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the situation and avoid an endless spiral of death and destruction.

In the almost 13 months since the brutal attacks perpetrated by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups on 7 October 2023, more than 42,000 Palestinians and over 1,600 Israelis and foreign nationals have been killed, with 101 hostages still held in captivity in Gaza.

Tens of thousands of people have been injured, the vast majority of them Palestinians, including a staggering number of women and children. Palestinian medics, journalists and over 230 UN staff have been killed.

Israeli military operations and fighting with Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups continued across the Strip. Israeli military evacuation orders cover over 80 per cent of the Strip. Nearly 2 million people are displaced.

In recent weeks, Israeli military operations have intensified in the northern Strip, killing scores of Palestinians. Military actions have also caused the closure of essential services, including water wells and medical facilities, further exacerbating the humanitarian crisis.

I again unequivocally condemn the widespread killing and injury of civilians in Gaza, the endless displacement of the population in Gaza and the shocking mistreatment of detainees.

I also condemn the continued holding of hostages in Gaza and the firing of rockets toward Israeli population centres, which has continued this month.

A fundamental shift is required to improve humanitarian operations in Gaza. It is essential to establish a safe enabling environment, meet operational requirements including funding, and ensure that Israeli authorities facilitate access, that will allow for unimpeded movement of food, shelter materials for the winter, medicine, fuel, and the capacity to repair essential life-saving infrastructure. The mounting lawlessness inside the Strip must also be addressed.

The second round of the polio campaign began on 14 October in central and southern Gaza, and it was very successful with over 90 per cent vaccinated, but we have yet to access the north. I urge Israeli authorities to facilitate the full rollout of this campaign and to facilitate a similarly coordinated effort to meet winter needs.

As the focus remains on Gaza and the escalating violence in the region, the situation in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is also deteriorating. Violence continued at alarming levels, having intensified since the conflict in Gaza began.

During the reporting period, 54 Palestinians, including three women and eight children, were killed, mostly in the context of ISF operations in Area A, which the IDF say are targeting Palestinian armed groups and militants.

In the same period, 8 Israelis, including four women, were killed by Palestinians in shooting attacks in the West Bank and Israel. Another two Israelis, including one woman, were killed in separate shooting attacks in Israel by Arab citizens of Israel.

On 1 October, two Palestinians carried out a shooting and stabbing attack in Jaffa, killing seven and wounding 15.

On 3 October, in Tulkarm, 18 Palestinians were killed in an Israeli airstrike, including one woman and three children. ISF said they killed a Hamas commander and several Hamas and PIJ militants in the camp. This was the single deadliest such incident in the West Bank in nearly twenty years.

With the start of the olive harvest this month, daily settler attacks and harassment continued across the West Bank, sometimes with the presence or support of Israeli forces. On 17 October, an IDF personnel shot dead a 59-year-old Palestinian woman harvesting olives in the West Bank. The olive harvest is critical to the Palestinian local economy. However, settler violence along with restrictions on access to land imposed by both settlers and Israeli forces place it at grave risk. I strongly condemn all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror.

I call on Israel to protect the Palestinian population and to hold perpetrators of all violence accountable. I urge security forces to exercise maximum restraint and use lethal force only when it is strictly unavoidable to protect life.

On 28 October the Israeli Knesset adopted two laws on UNRWA forbidding Israeli state officials from contact with UNRWA or its representatives and prohibiting UNRWA operations within what is referred to as the sovereign territory of the State of Israel. These developments risk the collapse of UNRWA's operations across the occupied Palestinian Territory and severely undermine humanitarian operations in Gaza, which rely on UNRWA. These bills are set to go into effect in ninety days.

The rights of Palestinian Refugees were set out in a General Assembly resolution that predates the creation of UNRWA. Unilateral steps, such as legislation, which seek to not only undermine United Nations' mandated work, but threaten to further set back a political resolution to the conflict on the basis of UN resolutions and international law must be avoided.

The confluence of challenges across the region requires us to act with urgency to cease hostilities and de-escalate. We must have a ceasefire now. We must have release of hostages in Gaza now. Without a ceasefire, the fundamental shift required to scale up humanitarian assistance that can meet the current catastrophe and to improve the situation for humanitarian deliveries will be impossible.

We must also concretely advance a political resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including by ceasing irreversible and unilateral steps on the ground that undermine the two-state solution. \

We urgently need a set of understandings to establish a political and security framework in Gaza in line with the principles I have outlined repeatedly to this Council. These frameworks must facilitate a Palestinian

governance structure that can re-unify Gaza and the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, politically, economically and administratively with no reductions in its territory, with no displacement of Palestinians from the Strip. All efforts to these ends must be prioritized.

I am very concerned that facts on the ground are being established that will undermine these core principles for years to come. This includes the attempt by Israel to dismantle UNRWA.

As I have repeatedly said, there can be no long-term solution in Gaza that is not political. There must be a path to the end of the occupation and achieve a two-state solution.

Israelis and Palestinians don't deserve this unrelenting conflict that has ruined countless lives. They deserve a better future, one without open-ended conflict, occupation and a regional war.

We must do everything in our power to chart a course towards a just and lasting peace that will enable a two-state solution on the basis of UN resolutions, previous agreements, and international law, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States.

The UN stands ready to support all these efforts. Thank you.

XXXI. Security Council strongly warns against any attempts to dismantle or diminish UNRWA's operations and mandate

On 30 October, Council President Pascale Christine Baeriswyl (Switzerland) issued the following Security Council [press statement](#).

The members of the Security Council emphasized the vital role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in providing life-saving humanitarian assistance to Palestinian refugees through essential education, health, relief and social services programmes and emergency assistance in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic.

The members of the Security Council underscored that UNRWA remains the backbone of all humanitarian response in Gaza, and affirmed that no organization can replace or substitute UNRWA's capacity and mandate to serve Palestinian refugees and civilians in urgent need of life-saving humanitarian assistance.

The members of the Security Council strongly warned against any attempts to dismantle or diminish UNRWA's operations and mandate, recognizing that any interruption or suspension of its work would have severe humanitarian consequences for millions of Palestinian refugees who depend on the Agency's services and also implications for the region.

The members of the Security Council expressed their grave concern over legislation adopted by the Israeli Knesset. In this regard, they urged the Israeli Government to abide by its international obligations, respect the privileges and immunities of UNRWA and live up to its responsibility to allow and facilitate full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian assistance in all its forms into and throughout the entire Gaza strip, including the provision of sorely needed basic services to the civilian population.

The members of the Security Council demanded to all parties to enable UNRWA to carry out its mandate, as adopted by the General Assembly, in all areas of operation, with full respect for the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and to respect international humanitarian law including the protection of UN and humanitarian facilities.

The members of the Security Council highlighted the findings of the Independent Review of Mechanisms and Procedures to Ensure Adherence by UNRWA to the Humanitarian Principle of Neutrality, led by Catherine Colonna, and welcomed the Secretary General's and the Agency's commitment to fully implement its

recommendations and called for their accelerated implementation, in line with UNRWA's commitment to the principle of neutrality.

They took note of the measures taken to terminate the employment of nine UNRWA staff members following the attacks of 7 October 2023. They underscored the importance to take timely measures to address any credible allegations and to ensure accountability for any violations of the Agency's policies related to the principle of neutrality.

The members of the Security Council called upon all parties to take necessary steps to allow and facilitate humanitarian aid to civilians in Gaza, in accordance with international humanitarian law.

The members of the Security Council expressed appreciation for the work of the staff of the Agency, including in very dire circumstances, in fulfilment of the Agency's mandate, underscored the importance of ensuring the continuity of UNRWA's vital services to Palestinian refugees and recognized Member States' efforts to enhance their support to UNRWA.

XXXII. For 75 years, UNRWA has been a beacon of hope for Palestine Refugees, UNRWA Commissioner-General tells Global Alliance for two-State solution

On 30 October, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Philippe Lazzarini, made the following [statement](#) at the High-level meeting of the Global Alliance for the implementation of the two-state solution held in Riyadh.

The vote by the Knesset against UNRWA this week is outrageous and sets a dangerous precedent. It is the latest in an ongoing campaign to discredit UNRWA and delegitimize its role in providing human-development and assistance to Palestine Refugees.

Israeli government officials have openly called for dismantling UNRWA. They made it an objective of the war in Gaza, in defiance of the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and of the International Court of Justice, including with a plan to replace UNRWA in East Jerusalem with settlements.

These bills will only deepen the suffering of Palestinians. These bills are not only against UNRWA; they are also against the Palestinians and their aspirations. We are witnessing a deliberate attempt to unilaterally shift the long-established parameters for a peaceful resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The implications for regional stability and international peace and security are immense.

For decades, Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory have endured the systematic denial of basic rights, segregation, a crippling blockade on Gaza, aggressive settlement expansion in the West Bank, and repeated cycles of conflict.

Over the past year, the efforts to end the possibility of Palestinian statehood have gained terrible momentum. And with that, the prospects for a two-state solution have gradually receded.

Gaza has been decimated. Over forty-three thousand people are reported killed, most of them women and children. Almost the entire population has been displaced multiple times. Two million people have been trapped in a living hell for more than 12 months. Most of them are now squeezed into 10 percent of the Gaza Strip, in intolerable living conditions.

Meanwhile, in North Gaza, a hundred thousand people are trapped in a complete siege, waiting for death by either an airstrike or starvation. Across Gaza, 660,000 children are out of school, living in the rubble. Many of them are alone, without any surviving family. They are traumatized and deeply vulnerable to exploitation, including recruitment by criminal gangs and armed groups.

Meanwhile, the occupied West Bank is in the grip of escalating conflict. Settler violence and military incursions by the Israeli Security Forces are a daily reality. Public infrastructure is destroyed systematically during military operations, inflicting collective punishment on Palestinians. The economy is on the verge of collapse, and despair is growing. Illegal settlement activity continues in defiance of the rulings of the International Court of Justice.

What is happening in Gaza and the West Bank is taking us further away from the prospect of peace, co-existence and self-determination. Instead, it is leading us down a path that will bring endless war and misery to Israelis and Palestinians for generations to come.

For 75 years, UNRWA has been a beacon of hope for Palestine Refugees. In anticipation of a just and lasting political solution, UNRWA has worked to give Palestine Refugees a life of dignity premised on access to basic rights, such as education and healthcare.

We have educated generations of students, many of whom have achieved remarkable success in the region and around the world. Countless alumni have told me about the pivotal role that UNRWA education has played in their lives. An education that champions human rights and gender equality, and promotes tolerance and respect for cultural diversity. You know how highly Palestinians value education, the only asset from which they have not been dispossessed.

We are now taking the risk of scarifying an entire generation of children across Gaza and in the West Bank. For example, failing to bring back 600,000 children to a relatively safe learning environment is to sacrifice an entire generation and will sow the seeds for future hatred and extremism.

In times of war, UNRWA has been able to rapidly transform into a humanitarian machine. We have seen this in Gaza over the past year. Our teachers became shelter managers overnight. Our clinics were transformed into emergency rooms amid a near-total collapse of hospitals. Most recently, we played a critical role in the successful first phase of an emergency polio vaccination campaign.

For the past year, UNRWA has been the last remaining lifeline for the population of Gaza. Despite this, and perhaps because of it, we have paid a heavy price. At least 237 of our colleagues have been killed, many with their families. Nearly 200 of our buildings have been damaged or destroyed, killing hundreds of displaced people seeking UN protection. Our clearly marked aid convoys have been hit and looted by armed actors. Restrictions on the entry of lifesaving supplies into Gaza mean that aid trucks languish at the border, while people starve a few kilometers away.

The latest bills passed at the Knesset seek to end contact with the Israeli Authorities, crippling our operations in the occupied Palestinian territory. The entire humanitarian response in Gaza, which relies on UNRWA's infrastructure, is at stake. The failure to push back against attempts to intimidate and undermine the United Nations has set a dangerous precedent.

Look no further than Lebanon and the despicable attacks on UNIFIL.

Let us be clear:

- First, the attacks on UNRWA are attacks against the broader rule-based system inherited from World War 2 and will weaken our global multilateral system.
- Second, the attacks are politically motivated by the goal of eliminating the status of "Palestine Refugees". But the refugee status of Palestine Refugees exists independently of UNRWA's services. The refugees will keep that status until a political solution is at hand.
- And third, the future of Palestine Refugees cannot be decided outside of a political framework. If a UN agency with a General Assembly mandate can collapse because one UN member state is defying the international rules-based order, then what remains standing?

I am encouraged by the international commitment to a political solution demonstrated by this conference. I sincerely thank His Highness the Foreign Minister for convening it, and for giving UNRWA a prominent platform.

The two-state solution is the internationally agreed framework.

UNRWA is an intrinsic part of a successful and fair transition. The Agency's most striking advantage is in education and primary healthcare. In the absence of a full-fledged state, only UNRWA can fulfill the learning and healthcare needs of Palestine Refugees.

I would like to conclude with three requests:

First, I urge you to use all the political, diplomatic and legal tools at your disposal to reject Israel's attempts to dismantle UNRWA, sideline the United Nations, and undermine multilateralism. This means that the bills need to be rescinded, or their application be put on hold.

Second, I ask you to safeguard UNRWA's role today and during the inevitably long and painful transition between a ceasefire and the "day after". And for this, we will need your political and financial support.

Finally, through the platform of this Global Alliance, I urge you to determine a viable political path towards a two-state solution, which will finally resolve the plight of Palestine Refugees.

Until then, I urge you to ensure UNRWA continues its indispensable role towards Palestine Refugees. Thank you.

XXXIII. What is happening in northern Gaza is no "evacuation" but forced displacement and ethnic cleansing, says UN Palestinian Rights Committee Chair at the Security Council debate

On 30 October, the Chair of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Cheikh Niang, delivered the following [statement](#) at the Security Council open debate.

/...

Today, I bring three critical messages from the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, addressing the profound urgency to reach a ceasefire in Gaza, the escalating threat to the United Nations operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and the imperative for implementation of the significant General Assembly resolution regarding the ICJ Advisory Opinion.

For more than a year we have witnessed unimaginable destruction and civilian casualties and gross violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Hopes for an immediate and lasting ceasefire have all but vanished, in spite of the calls of this Security Council, the General Assembly and the international community at large. The assault by Israel, the occupying Power, on the Gaza Strip has reached unprecedented levels, with northern Gaza now facing near-total devastation. An estimated 400,000 Palestinians are being forcibly displaced before our eyes. This is not an "evacuation" but forced displacement and ethnic cleansing, civilians are being forced to leave their homes and shelters under bombs and gunfire and starved with little or no aid.

Most alarming is the Security Council's passive tolerance of the killing and maiming of civilian and wanton destruction of civilian property, repeatedly and wrongly justified by Israel and other members as "self-defense", and the fading hopes for progress in interminably sabotaged negotiations for a ceasefire. The critical urgency to enforce a ceasefire has been completely lost, eclipsed by the relentless violence by Israel's occupying forces and a soaring Palestinian civilian death toll. Instead, the bloodshed continues unabated, marking a profound failure of our collective humanity and the Council's fundamental Charter duty.

Our Committee Bureau's analysis of OCHA data shows that between 10 June 2024, the date on which Security Council ceasefire Resolution 2735 was adopted, and 25 October, 5,723 Palestinians were killed and 15,832 were injured in Gaza. This is unconscionable and it has happened on our watch. This devastating toll has now surpassed 42,847 deaths since 7 October, representing not just a statistic but the tragic loss of men, women, children, and elderly persons, innocent lives that could have been saved if the Security Council had enforced its own ceasefire with resolve and urgency.

The failure to implement resolution 2735 has not only led to continued bloodshed and the destruction and loss of civilian lives in Gaza, which independent experts, scholars and jurists around the world believe amount to genocide, but has also undermined the very credibility of this Council and the multilateral system. Each life lost is a testament to our collective failure to uphold the principles of the UN Charter and ensure the protection of civilians.

The Security Council must act decisively to end this horrific war. It is our duty under the UN Charter to demand an immediate ceasefire, protect civilians and uphold international law. The Council's hesitation has enabled the weaponization of humanitarian assistance and starvation and the forced displacement of Palestinians by Israel, the occupying Power, which threatens to become permanent, as threatened by Israeli officials who now boast about their plans to build settlements in Gaza.

The urgency cannot be overstated, this is a matter of life and death for millions, and a direct threat to international peace and security. International humanitarian law is being violated with impunity, with perpetrators often shielded by double standards that undermine the rule of law and the multilateral system. The divisions in this body are testimony to this reality. We call on all Members of this Organization to unite to act now and prevent further atrocities.

The failure to act threatens not only the credibility of the United Nations but also the recently adopted "Pact for the Future." The values enshrined in the UN Charter are being flagrantly disregarded in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and now there are threats to dismantle the very institutions providing vital humanitarian aid, including the United Nations system operating there.

We strongly condemn Israel's threats to the United Nations, especially its unlawful attempts to ban and abolish UNRWA, which remains the only lifeline for millions of Palestine refugees and displaced Palestinians. Since the conflict began, 464 incidents have impacted UNRWA premises in Gaza, including military interference and attacks that have killed and injured civilians and damaged and destroyed UNRWA properties, including shelters for nearly 2 million displaced Palestinians. UNRWA's critical work is being impeded and obstructed and with 233 of its staff killed as of 21 October. The Secretary-General has been publicly targeted and vilified.

We condemn Israel's ban on UNRWA, Gaza's primary lifeline amid a deepening crisis. This unprecedented unilateral Israeli decision endangers Gaza's fragile aid distribution, contravenes the UN Charter, and violates Israel's obligations under international law. We demand that the Security Council reject it.

We urge the Security Council to stand firm in support of the Secretary-General and UNRWA's mandate, which has been supported by international consensus for decades. Immediate, unimpeded humanitarian access must be ensured, and the UN's role in the region must be protected.

The Council must reject any attempts to intimidate or sideline the UN's lawful and legitimate humanitarian efforts and commendable efforts to protect civilians.

We commend the General Assembly's adoption of resolution ES-10/24 of 18 September 2024 on the ICJ Advisory Opinion on Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the illegality of the Israeli occupation and we urge the immediate implementation of this landmark decision. The Committee is collaborating with Member States on implementation, including efforts to encourage Member States to submit proposals for inclusion in the Secretary-General's upcoming report.

We therefore appeal to the Security Council to fulfill its responsibility by urgently considering actions needed to swiftly end Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territory, foremost through the implementation of its own numerous resolutions.

Additionally, we welcome Türkiye's initiative, in cooperation with 26 Member States, to jointly call for a halt to arms transfers to Israel and pressing for an immediate ceasefire, efforts of which are in line with the GA resolution and deserve support.

The Committee will once again commemorate worldwide the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November. This year, the event will be marked by even deeper mourning as the Israeli military assault on Gaza and the West Bank continues unabated. At UNHQ in New York, we will commemorate the event on 26 November at ECOSOC Chamber and I invite all of you to join us in reaffirming our support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and independence, and to honor the UN's enduring commitment to their cause until a just solution is realized in conformity with international law and the relevant UN resolutions.

In closing, let me stress once again that only dialogue and justice, not violence, will resolve the Palestine question.

This is why we, in the Committee, support the Secretary-General's principled position that there can be no "Day After" in Gaza without a political horizon. The Security Council must take the lead in efforts to urgently restart dialogue to address the Palestine question.

A lasting peace in the region will only be achieved through a two-state solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security based on the 1967 borders and with a just solution for the Palestine refugees, whose plight we continue to painfully witness today in this ongoing Nakba.

XXXIV. Palestinian Rights Committee Bureau condemns Knesset's UNRWA ban, calling it as unlawful as the occupation itself

On 31 October, the Bureau of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People issued the following [statement](#).

The Bureau of the UN Palestinian Rights Committee denounces the Israeli parliament's (Knesset) adoption of two bills in regard to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to outright ban the Agency and strip it of its privileges and immunities as a United Nations entity, obstructing its ability to carry out its essential operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as mandated by the General Assembly. This unprecedented illegal action by Israel, the Occupying Power, contravenes the United Nations Charter, the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, and countless relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and directly violates Israel's obligations as the Occupying Power under international humanitarian law. This week, I held two more in a series of meetings with the families of hostages. I call again for their immediate and unconditional release.

As [affirmed by the International Court of Justice](#), Israel has no entitlement to sovereignty or to sovereign powers in any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, due to its status as an Occupying Power. Therefore, the Knesset's decision to ban UNRWA is as unlawful as the occupation itself, which must end as swiftly as possible, as determined by the Court and General Assembly [resolution ES-10/24](#).

Israel's unlawful decision and hostile actions against UNRWA, a UN-mandated entity, threaten to exacerbate the suffering of millions of Palestine refugees across the region, especially in the Gaza Strip, where more than 2 million people depend on the Agency for survival, relying on it for essential services such as education, food, protection, shelter, and healthcare. These actions amount to collective punishment, depriving Gaza's population of life-saving aid and worsening famine and humanitarian conditions. The Agency itself has suffered severe

losses, with 237 staff members killed and over 200 facilities damaged or destroyed. Israel's efforts to undermine and dismantle UNRWA also aim to negate the legal status and rights of the Palestine refugees, obstructing the realization of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights and the two-state solution, and must be firmly rejected.

The Committee Bureau calls upon the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Member States to categorically reject Israel's decision, demand its immediate reversal, and insist that Israel respect UNRWA's mandate, immediately cease all attacks on the Agency and its humanitarian operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Israel's attacks on the United Nations, its missions and agencies, the Secretary-General, and its staff must not be tolerated. The Committee Bureau furthermore calls on the United Nations and all Member States to reaffirm their longstanding, principled support for UNRWA's critical mandate as conferred by the General Assembly [resolution 302\(IV\)](#) in 1949.

The Committee Bureau also warns against Israel's exploitation of illegal actions, such as the UNRWA ban legislation, to distract the international community's attention from the urgent need to achieve an immediate and permanent ceasefire, halt the forced displacement of the Palestinian people, ensure the rapid and unimpeded flow of humanitarian assistance in Gaza, fully implement General Assembly resolution ES-10/24, and revive a credible political process rooted in international law towards the achievement of a just and lasting peace.

XXXV. Palestinian Rights Committee holds briefing on international legal responsibilities for preventing genocide featuring UN Special Rapporteurs, Commission of Inquiry

On 31 October, the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People organized a briefing titled "International legal responsibilities for preventing genocide, holding perpetrators of war crimes accountable, and for ending the unlawful occupation of Palestine". The [Chair summary](#) of the briefing is reproduced below.

On 31 October 2024, the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People organized the briefing "International legal responsibilities for preventing genocide, holding perpetrators of war crimes accountable, and for ending the unlawful occupation of Palestine".

The event featured presentations by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territory Occupied Since 1967, Francesca Albanese; and UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health, Tlaleng Mofokeng; as well as a Commissioner of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, Chris Sidoti. These briefings addressed their recent reports to the UN General Assembly and recent developments, including the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice in July 2024. The Committee also heard from representatives of the Independent Commission for Human Rights of Palestine, Diana Buttu; and the NGO "Law for Palestine", Anisha Patel.

The arrangement of this event follows on the Bureau's prior meetings with these UN counterparts in 2022 and 2023, and the shared objective of increased cooperation with the COI OPTEJI and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) towards highlighting violations of Palestinian rights and Israel's disregard for international law and UN resolutions as part of the Committee's efforts to raise awareness and mobilize accountability.

Further, in 2022 the Bureau had adopted a decision to request a briefing from COI OPTEJI and UN SR Albanese to the full Committee to help disseminate knowledge about their reports and findings. The latter have become even more relevant as the COI OPTEJI mandate allowed it to launch an investigation and proactively gather information as soon as the crisis in Gaza started on 7 October 2023, as well as evidence supporting allegations of genocide. The event also provided an opportunity for enhanced cooperation with civil society, one of the priorities of the Committee in carrying out its General Assembly mandate.

Since these consultations and developments, several significant reports and decisions have been issued, impacting the ongoing UN deliberations on the question of Palestine, including the events of 7 October 2023 and the subsequent Israeli war on Gaza, and the onset of what the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has described as a plausible genocide against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

In March 2024, UN SR Albanese issued a report entitled “Anatomy of Genocide”, in which she concluded that there had been reasonable grounds to believe that the threshold indicating the commission of the crime of genocide had been met as a result of the actions of Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip. Additionally, in June 2024, the COI OPTEJI issued its first report on the dramatic developments since October 2023, concluding that Israel has committed war crimes and crimes against humanity.

On 19 July 2024, the ICJ issued a seminal advisory opinion, pursuant to a request by the United Nations General Assembly on 30 December 2022, regarding, inter alia, the legal consequences arising from Israel’s ongoing violation of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, prolonged occupation, settlement and annexation of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, and related discriminatory measures. The Court unequivocally declared Israel’s occupation as unlawful and pronounced the responsibilities of Israel, all States and the United Nations for bringing an end to this unlawful situation as rapidly as possible. In a separate case, *South Africa vs. Israel*, the ICJ has thus far issued three sets of provisional measures orders (26 January 2024, 28 March 2024, 24 May 2024) regarding the latter’s violations of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Genocide Convention) in the Gaza Strip.

On 18 September, the General Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/24 “Advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences arising from Israel’s policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and from the illegality of Israel’s continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”, which inter alia called on Israel to end its occupation within 12 months, on Member States to cease any support of Israel’s occupation, including in regards to settlement activities and the halt of arms transfers to Israel, and on the Secretary-General to provide within 3 months a report on the implementation the resolution, including any actions taken by Israel, other States and international organizations.

The meeting thus provided an opportunity to discuss the next collective steps and to use the expertise and information gathering of the invited speakers to inform action in the General Assembly.

The objectives of the meeting were:

1. Highlighting the responsibility of the United Nations and Third States in preventing genocide, protecting Palestinian civilians, including women and children, and holding the perpetrators accountable;
2. Highlighting the responsibility of the United Nations and Third States in ending the unlawful Israeli occupation and system of apartheid and racial segregation as determined by the ICJ advisory opinion;
3. Addressing the relevant reports of UN committees and special rapporteurs and their respective roles in urging and assisting Member States and the organization as a whole to take concrete actions to enforce UN resolutions, decisions and rulings and to uphold the Charter towards ensuring respect for human rights and promoting the realization of justice and peace; and
4. Discussing the necessary role of the United Nations and Third States in implementing the rulings of international courts in accordance with international law as it pertains to achieving a just solution to the Palestine question in all its aspects and to upholding the rule of law and credibility of the international legal order.

In his opening statement, the Chair of the Committee and Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations in New York, Ambassador Cheikh Niang, commended the work of UN experts in investigating and documenting what has been happening. They had sifted through vast amounts of documents and testimonies, gathered evidence and separated facts from misinformation. Their “efforts are vital, not only for telling the story of Gaza, but more importantly for ensuring accountability”, he said.

The Committee would continue to support accountability concerning all individuals and parties responsible for crimes against humanity, and ensuring all victims are recognized. Violations of international human rights law must be condemned regardless of who commits those breaches.

Against the background of the Gaza War Amb. Niang highlighted the prolonged failure to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and underscored that the two-state solution enshrined in UN resolutions remains the only viable framework for negotiations.

He outlined three key steps forward:

1. An immediate ceasefire, the immediate and unconditional release of all remaining Israeli captives in Gaza and Palestinian detainees in Israel, and a massive scale up of humanitarian aid to Gaza had to be put in force;
2. General Assembly resolution ES-10/24, calling on UN member states to comply with the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, had to be fully implemented; and
3. Member States of the United Nations would have to safeguard the international system of rules-based multilateralism, for the sake of the people in Gaza, and the rest of Occupied Palestine in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in the whole region.

In her remarks, the representative of the State of Palestine, Deputy Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations in New York, Ambassador Feda Abdelhady-Nasser, said that Palestinians in Gaza had endured “no chapter darker” than the past year, with tens of thousands of civilian deaths, almost a thousand families entirely wiped out, thousands crushed to death under rubble and two million forcibly displaced and hunted down by the Israeli occupation forces. With northern Gaza turning into the epicentre of the onslaught, those left are facing starvation and must now choose between ethnic cleansing and submission to colonial domination.

During the briefing session, Ms. Albanese addressed criticism of experts and representatives of Member States using the term “genocide”, saying that as “a reluctant chronicler of genocide,” she is convinced that the international community must follow the law and apply the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG) to recognize what is happening in Gaza as a genocide as what Palestinians in Gaza are currently experiencing “is not simply war crimes and crimes against humanity.”

She added that under the fog of war, Israel has accelerated the forced displacement of the Palestinians that began decades ago, but “what’s happening today is much more severe because of the technology, the weaponry and the impunity”. It was time to consider suspending Israel’s credential as a Member State in the United Nations. Acknowledging that this is a sensitive topic, she said that while other countries also have violated human rights, none has maintained an unlawful occupation violating decades of UN resolutions as Israel has done.

Ms. Mofokeng said the Israeli leadership’s promise, announced in late 2024, to destroy Gaza has been fulfilled. “The Strip now is a wasteland of rubble and human remains” where survivors struggle to hold on to life and bodies are decomposing in the ruins of what used to be clinics and hospitals. Some 560 attacks have been reported on health facilities, which face shortages of power, medical supplies and personnel – only 17 of Gaza’s 36 hospitals are partially functioning, depriving the population of desperately needed healthcare for the wounded and sick. Accusing Israel and its allies of “knowingly and intentionally imposing famine and dehydration”, she warned that these practices will stunt an entire generation.

Highlighting the urgency of psychological support, she said the prolonged violence had created a vast need while at the same making it unavailable. Healthcare workers on duty had been arrested and detained, with some allegedly showing signs of torture. “The destruction of health systems created by this genocide is incompatible with [...] the right to physical and mental health,” she asserted. Addressing the Palestinian people she said, “I am ashamed and deeply sorry that the multilateral world has failed you.”

Mr. Sidoti noted that the situation had become so dire it defied description. Even “cold-hearted, hard-shelled diplomats” had told him how overwhelmed and sad they were. Citing the Commission’s October 2022 report, he described how it had concluded that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory had become unlawful and then recommended that the General Assembly refer the situation to the International Court of Justice. “To my shock, the Assembly acted on it almost immediately,” he said, and highlighted that the Court’s Advisory Opinion, issued in July 2024, had come to the same conclusion and ruled that Israel’s occupation was unlawful and must be ended immediately.

In addition, the Commission also has an accountability mandate, which provides information to the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court on a monthly basis. “We collect the information, we verify it, we form conclusions as to the significance of the information in relation to international crimes and we provide it to the Prosecutor,” he said, while action was then up to the Court. Further, he emphasized the responsibility of the Security Council to take decisive actions in the face of such overwhelming evidence.

Ms. Buttu highlighted that the destruction in Gaza was so massive, it would take more than 18 years just to remove the rubble. While almost ten per cent of the Gaza Strip’s population had been killed, injured, or was missing, over eighty per cent had been subjected to some type of evacuation, with Israel treating Palestinians “like human pinballs”.

She referred to an “axis of genocide”, which included Israel, United States and some European States that were pushing for or at least enabling the continuation of the Gaza War. She denounced the international community’s failure to speak in one voice against it. She drew attention to the cases of Israeli soldiers uploading the evidence of their crimes on social media, adding that no one has been prosecuted for these crimes. “Imagine what it is like to live in a society where this is considered to be okay,” she added.

Ms. Patel said that Israel’s genocidal assault against the Palestinian people in Gaza, which she called “settler-colonial”, was only the most violent manifestation of the 76-year-long Nakba inflicted upon the Palestinian people. “We are all too familiar with the haunting pleas from Palestinian journalists who are being brutally targeted as we speak for broadcasting their own destruction in real time,” she said, noting that the first 11 pages of the 649-page list of victims killed in the Israeli onslaught, which was released by Gaza’s Health Ministry in September, were names of Palestinian children who had not yet reached the age of one year. “But you all already know this,” she said, adding that the international community has ample documentation of Palestinian children “being blown to smithereens by 2,000-pound bombs”.

Outlining the legal consequences and responsibilities of third States for failing to prevent and punish genocide, she highlighted that the International Court of Justice had affirmed that Member States could also be found complicit if they had aided and abetted Israel’s actions. “The most basic ask” was a complete embargo on selling and transferring arms, munitions and related equipment, she said, adding that this obligation arose from the Court’s advisory opinion and the Genocide Convention. The non-assistance obligations also concern economic, diplomatic, cultural and academic relations. Third States were obliged to cease all financial, trade, investment and economic ties with Israel, which supported its unlawful occupation and apartheid.

In the ensuing discussion, representatives of Member States voiced profound frustration over the worsening of the Gaza War. They reiterated the call for an immediate ceasefire, accountability and a long-term resolution to the Palestinian question. While some called for a stop to the “collective murder” of Palestinians and their support without hypocrisy and double standards, others underscored the importance of adherence to international law, including UN resolutions and Advisory Opinions of the International Court of Justice. They also expressed solidarity with all UN entities and mechanisms working on Palestine-related issues and urged allocating sufficient resources to buttress their mandates.

In her closing remarks, Ambassador Abdelhady-Nasser (Palestine) stated that Israel was also “waging an open war on the UN” and questioned its continued UN membership. Despite committing all the crimes exposed during the briefings, Israel has been shielded by the United States’ veto in the Security Council. She also highlighted the punitive measures against the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) while at the same time acknowledging the outpouring of solidarity from around the world. “The days have never been darker, but the prospects for justice have never been greater. Do not forsake

the Palestinian people, do not take their resilience for granted, do not normalize genocide, do not become numb”, she said.
