

*Permanent Observer Mission
of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations*



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة
لدولة فلسطين
لدى الأمم المتحدة

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12 January 2024

Excellency,

As we near **100 days of Israel's criminal onslaught** against the Palestinian civilian population under its occupation, we are nearing a **horrific toll of 100,000 Palestinian casualties**. And still, there is **no ceasefire, leading to more innocent victims by the day**.

The victims are the **23,708 confirmed Palestinian children, women and men killed** in the unbridled violence and **massacres being perpetrated daily by the Israeli occupying forces (IOF)** in the Gaza Strip; alongside at least **60,005 people injured and maimed** in those attacks, many struggling for their lives and dying each day; and the **more than 7,000 people who are missing, buried under the rubble** of destroyed homes and presumed dead, denied even the dignity of burial as incessant Israel's bombardments prevent rescue and recovery, adding more victims by the day; and they include **more than 332 Palestinian men, women and children killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem**, and the more than **4,157 people injured** in attacks by IOF and terrorist settlers.

The reality is, however, that the **entire Palestinian civilian population has fallen victim to this genocidal aggression by Israel**, which is terrorizing, tormenting and traumatizing everyone in its path. **Nearly the entire population of Gaza has been forcibly displaced**, some forced to flee in desperate search of safety up to **6 or 7 times**, suffering not only loss of the sanctity of their homes, but loss of family life, possessions, privacy for basic human needs. **Threats and attempts continue to depopulate, i.e. ethnically cleanse, Gaza one way or another**, whether forced expulsion of Palestinian civilians, or provocation of a **mass exodus**, or so-called "**voluntary migration**", as brazenly sought by Israeli officials.

In this regard, it is a fact that the **entire population is suffering from hunger and thirst** as Israel continues obstructing humanitarian aid. The World Food Programme (WFP) finding that **4 out of 5 people in the world experiencing famine or catastrophic hunger are in Gaza right now**. Israel's infliction of death and destruction, coupled with food and water scarcity, as well as accelerating **spread of disease**, conditions are clearly intended to **make Gaza unfit for human life and to coerce the population to leave**.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has reminded: *International law prohibits forcible transfer of protected persons within or deportation from occupied territory.* Moreover, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing has stressed that: *"Forcible transfer of Gazan population is an act of genocide especially given the high number of children"*, warning that States *"will be guilty of aiding and abetting genocide if they agree to any transfer of population."*

This an **aggression without precedent in modern times** in its scale and speed of killing and maiming of civilians, especially children, and UN staff, medical workers, journalists. It is unabated brutality and a **total denigration of human life**. As stressed by UN OCHA Chief Martin Griffiths: *"Gaza has become a place of death and despair"*, and by the OCHA team leader in Gaza, Gemma Connell: *"The suffering is everywhere – I mean absolutely everywhere – that I have been "I have never in my humanitarian career seen [this] level of suffering, desperation and depravation."*

H.E. Mr. Nicolas de Rivière
The President of the Security Council of the United Nations
The United Nations, New York

And still, Israel **shows no signs of stopping this criminal war**. On the contrary, as proven again today at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Israel **continues justifying its depravity**, its officials persist with incitement to genocide, **calls for “annihilation” of Gaza** ongoing, spurring **Israeli soldiers to carry on with the atrocities** against Palestinians in Gaza and in the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, where invasions of refugee camps and other areas are being carried out on a daily basis.

Every single day Israel proves the inherent violence, racism and persecution of this occupation, its colonial and apartheid nature and objectives undeniable, and proves the inherent terror and extremism of this occupation, and proves the inherent illegality of this occupation, **an aggression in every manifestation, a constant assault on the lives, rights, dignity, existence of the Palestinian people, before October 7th and every single minute since**. And still, Israel claims that it did not instigate this cycle violence, as each one before it, insisting to carry on with its aggression, killing and destroying to no end, ignoring the global calls for ceasefire, and insisting to **prolong and entrench this belligerent occupation**, denying the Palestinian people every human right and obstructing peace and security.

No one should be fooled by Israel’s claims of sparing civilian lives, the facts speak for themselves. Just today, IOF issued **new evacuation orders** to residents of Al Mawasi and other areas in southern Gaza affecting **more than 18,000 people**, who will once again be forced to flee, when there is nowhere else safe from Israel’s bombardments. Moreover, in just the past 24 hours IOF have killed and injured hundreds of people in attacks across Gaza. The international humanitarian organization OXFAM has shockingly found that, **“Israel’s military is killing Palestinians at an average rate of 250 people a day which massively exceeds the daily death toll of any other major conflict of recent years”**, with many more lives at risk from hunger, disease and cold.

These staggering figures – as compelling presented yesterday by South Africa to the ICJ in its plea for provisional measures under the Genocide Convention to halt Israel’s onslaught on the Palestinian people – include on **average each day: the killing of multi-generational families, 48 mothers, 2 every hour, over 117 children, over 3 medics, 2 teachers, more than one UN staff and more than 1 journalist, and the wounding of 629 people, including 10 Palestinian children who will have one or more legs amputated**. Even the bodies of those who are dead and buried are not respected as Israel continues to bulldoze and dig up graves, defiling and dismembering bodies, refusing to even let them rest in peace and causing further trauma to their grieving families, if they have survived.

Pope Francis has stressed: “The victims are not collateral damage, they are men, women and children with names whose lives have been taken”, and implored the world to see war for what it is: **“an immense tragedy, a useless slaughter that offends the dignity of every person on earth.”**

Only a ceasefire can stop the bloodletting and save human lives. The calls for a ceasefire continue to be reiterated by the UN Secretary-General and every UN agency and humanitarian organization on the ground witnessing these atrocities, and called for the world over, by 153 countries at the UN General Assembly and by millions of people of conscience of all faiths. Only a ceasefire can end the killing and maiming of civilians, destruction to homes and lives, and forced displacement, and only a ceasefire can allow for the distribution of aid that is desperately needed by millions who are suffering untold miseries and indignities.

As stressed recently by WFP Executive Director Cindy McCain: *“We cannot stand by and watch people starve. Humanitarian access is needed now for supplies to flow into and throughout Gaza and for civilians to safely receive life-saving aid... More than anything, what is needed now is peace. WFP reiterates the call for a humanitarian ceasefire - the world must come together now to save lives.”*

Today, we thus once again reiterate our appeal to the Security Council and international community for immediate action to: **1. Secure a ceasefire in Gaza as a matter of utmost urgency to save human lives;**

2. Provide desperately-needed humanitarian assistance to Palestinian civilians in Gaza; and 3. Halt Israel's forced displacement of Palestinian civilians.

We call on all States to act, in word and deeds, to uphold international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and all of their obligations thereunder to help bring an end to this calamity in Gaza and to assist the Palestinian people to bring an end to this historic injustice. This Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people must be halted now. Those who try to shame or obstruct principled, responsible, moral efforts to stop this inhumanity have lost their own moral compass and contribute, whether directly or indirectly, to the deepening of this injustice, to the unraveling of international law and the human suffering and insecurity that are its primary consequences.

We thus reiterate our calls for immediate action, including urgent and serious efforts to implement the most recent UN resolutions concerning the crisis in Gaza, namely **Security Council resolutions 2712 (2023) and 2720 (2720) and General Assembly resolutions ES-10/21 and ES-10/22**, towards ensuring an **immediate humanitarian ceasefire, protection of the civilian population, acceleration of humanitarian aid** to Palestinians civilians in Gaza, and preventing further escalation of this already disastrous situation.

This letter is in follow-up to our **821** letters on the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 3 January 2024 (A/ES-10/_-S/2024/_) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations against our people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter circulated to the Security Council members for their valuable consideration and distributed as an official document of the Security Council.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Dr. Riyad Mansour
Minister, Permanent Observer