

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



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة  
لدولة فلسطين  
لدى الأمم المتحدة

Ref. SGC.252/2023

25 October 2023

Excellency,

For eighteen days, the world has watched Israel's indiscriminate bombardment of the Gaza Strip, and for eighteen days the world has allowed the horror to carry on – with full and open support by some – against the besieged Palestinian civilians, allowing the death, destruction and trauma to reach catastrophic levels.

Israel, the occupying Power, does not even conceal its barbaric intentions, carrying on in full view of the world with its willful killing of innocent civilians, massacring families in their entirety, and inflicting wanton destruction, in grave breach of international law and every norm of human decency and morality.

And yet, the international community, including the Security Council, continues to waver and equivocate, failing to uphold its minimum responsibilities to demand an immediate halt to this carnage and inhumanity. How can it be that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the bloodshed of civilians is justified by anyone? This is not a war between two sides, there is absolutely no symmetry; this is the slaughter of civilians, methodically and deliberately perpetrated by an illegal occupier against a defenseless occupied people.

More than **6,500 Palestinians, including 2,500 children, have been killed and more than 17,000 have been injured, hundreds critically wounded**, by Israeli missile strikes and artillery bombardment on Gaza that persist even as I write to you, the atrocities are accumulating by the minute.

**Yesterday alone this Israeli campaign of terror killed more than 700 Palestinians in Gaza, including 305 children – the highest number of casualties in a 24-hour period.** To put such heinous crimes in perspective: one Palestinian is killed every two minutes and one child is killed every five minutes by the Israeli war machine.

There is nowhere safe and no protection for our civilians as Israel drops its bombs all across Gaza, north and south, attacking homes, hospitals, schools and UN buildings. **Israel has carried over 7,000 airstrikes in the past week alone**, amounting to no less than 50 airstrikes per square mile on a besieged people suffering from one of the most egregious forms of collective punishment in modern history.

Even those surviving these attacks cannot be saved as Israel's blockade on fuel and electricity has brought hospitals to a standstill, risking the lives of the thousands of wounded and the sick. Israel also persists with its depraved demands for mass evacuation of residential areas, hospitals, and UN schools sheltering the displaced. The extent of the forced placement is staggering: of the 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza, the majority refugees, nearly **1.5 million are now internally displaced in an area of just 140 square miles** (365 square kilometers), their homes destroyed and fear for their safety forcing them to flee.

According to OCHA, nearly **70% of Palestinians killed by this Israeli onslaught were children and women.** Of the more than 1,500 people either trapped or dead under the rubble of destroyed homes, at least 800 are children. Israel's relentless airstrikes and erasure of entire neighborhoods have it impossible for rescue teams and desperate ordinary people to reach them. Humanitarian needs also continue to climb as Israel continues obstructing the delivery of food, water, fuel and other essentials supplies. In a press release today, Oxfam International states that food aid is only at a level of 2% of that prior to the siege of Gaza, and that **"starvation is being used as a weapon of war against Gaza civilians"**.

H.E. Mr. Sérgio França Danese  
President of the Security Council  
The United Nations, New York

Israeli attacks also continue escalating in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, where yet another Israeli airstrike has been carried out against Jenin refugee camp, causing death and destruction. That attack and the relentless violence by **Israeli occupying forces (IOF) and Israeli settlers have now killed 104 Palestinians, including more than 27 children, and injured nearly 2,000 other civilians** in the occupied West Bank since 7 October. And today alone, IOF killed five Palestinians, including four children, in attacks on Jenin, Qalqilya and Qalandiya. IOF and settlers are terrorizing our people as Israel is tightening its restrictions on movement and other measures of collective punishment, confident it can do so with impunity as the world looks away.

This human and humanitarian catastrophe is worsening by the hour and will reach unthinkable proportions if Israel is not stopped and demanded to end its aggression and siege on our people.

There is no justification for the continued shielding of Israel by a chorus proclaiming it has an exclusive “right to self-defense” as it butchers Palestinian civilians, including children, women, elderly persons and disabled persons. There is no law in this world that permits such atrocities, and the distortion and exploitation of international law to provide cover for Israel’s massacres and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people must stop.

There is no pretext that can justify such heinous crimes as self-defense. The blind rhetoric and unconditional support being given by some to the occupying Power has in effect given it a license to kill and perpetrate the most abhorrent crimes against an occupied civilian population that is supposed to be protected under international law.

As this Nakba continues to be perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian people, **we must ask yet again: Until when?**

When will the international community, including the Security Council, act to put an end to the war crimes and crimes against humanity that are being perpetrated by Israel in broad daylight? When will the International Criminal Court begin its investigation of the Situation in Palestine?

When will there be accountability for the lawlessness and impunity that is trampling over the bodies of Palestinian children, women and men and that is shredding international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, which is meant to protect peoples all over the world – all peoples regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality and religion – from such crimes?

Continued inaction is complicity and cannot be justified. The Security Council cannot sit by and watch as the Charter is being torn asunder by Israel, as it lashes out against anyone, person or country, that is standing on principle and demanding that it stop its grave breaches of international law, stop its war crimes and crimes against humanity. This includes its targeting of even the United Nations Secretary-General with appalling disrespect and inflammatory rhetoric, amounting to incitement, assailing him for simply upholding his Charter mandate and appealing for humanity.

The international community cannot allow such brazen intimidation and scare tactics to go unanswered. It is time to stand up for international law and the human rights of all peoples, in all places and in all circumstances, including in Palestine. We thus reiterate our calls to the international community to act quickly and in unity to mobilize responsible and compassionate action and to demand an immediate ceasefire, to demand a stop to the massacres and mass displacement, and to ensure that desperately-needed humanitarian aid reaches the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza.

To this end, we will continue our efforts in all forums, including in the General Assembly soon to resume in its 10<sup>th</sup> emergency special session and also in the Security Council, ever insistent that the international community uphold its legal, humanitarian, political and moral obligations towards the question of Palestine. **We urge all peace-loving nations to support these urgent efforts and to prove, not only to the Palestinian people but to the peoples of the world who are watching, that right will prevail over might and humanity will prevail over injustice.**

This letter is in follow-up to our 809 letters regarding 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 20 October 2023 (A/ES-10/xxx-S/2023/xxx) 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 being committed against the Palestinian 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 made available to the members of the Security Council for their valuable consideration and distributed as an official document of the Security Council.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Riyad Mansour". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Riyadh Mansour  
Minister, Permanent Observer