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Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories

Written statement* submitted by China Society for Human Rights Studies (CSHRS), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is
circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Working Together with a Responsible Attitude to Solve the Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza

The global community has persistently voiced apprehension regarding the human rights landscape in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, a topic consistently featured on the agenda of the United Nations Human Rights Council during its sessions. Recently, the escalating humanitarian crisis unfolding in the Gaza Strip amidst the protracted conflict has garnered heightened concern.

According to the information released by the United Nations on February 2, the conflict has precipitated a staggering toll, encompassing fatalities, injuries, and disappearances affecting an estimated 100,000 individuals within the confines of the Gaza Strip. Distressingly, statistics reveal that 60% of the reported 27,019 casualties comprise women and children. Furthermore, a minimum of 17,000 children have been tragically rendered orphaned or separated from their families. Rick Peeperkorn, a representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) within the Occupied Palestinian Territories, has articulated profound unease regarding the absence of secure pathways and humanitarian corridors within the Gaza Strip. This dearth of safety measures has markedly compounded the already formidable challenges associated with executing humanitarian endeavors in a prompt and secure manner. Ajith Sunghay, head of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, has echoed sentiments of alarm regarding the dire humanitarian predicament unfolding in Gaza. The acute shortages spanning various essential supplies and pervasive sentiments of panic and indignation have precipitated a descent into widespread turmoil, leading Sunghay to liken the prevailing circumstances to a pressure cooker.

However, we have noticed that in the face of such severe humanitarian crises, instead of responsibly pursuing a resolution, certain nations have exacerbated the situation by taking a biased stance. In the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, the United States of America has deployed two aircraft carrier battle groups, namely the USS Ford and the USS Eisenhower, persistently dispatching substantial military resources to the Middle East in support of Israel. In October 2023, the United States of America wielded its veto power to block a proposal presented by Brazil in the United Nations Security Council, citing the absence of recognition of Israel's inherent right to self-defense. This proposal was designed to safeguard civilians and civilian infrastructure while ensuring unimpeded, expeditious, secure, and comprehensive humanitarian access to Gaza. Furthermore, the report released by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry during the 53rd session of the Human Rights Council, focusing on matters concerning the Occupied Palestinian Territory (including East Jerusalem) and Israel, highlighted the intent of nations like the United States of America to constrict the sphere of free expression regarding critiques of Israeli authorities' human rights actions. Such efforts, coupled with the categorical branding of critics as "anti-Semitic", serve not to ameliorate the worsening humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip but rather to erode the existing consensus and collaborative endeavors within the global community.

It is our firm conviction that the resolution of the humanitarian crisis unfolding in the Gaza Strip, precipitated by the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, must adhere to the principles outlined in the relevant Solutions of the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council. All stakeholders must transcend narrow self-interest and discharge their obligations under international law, encompassing international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Specifically, we urge a collective response to the call for "urgent and extended humanitarian pauses and corridors throughout the Gaza Strip for a sufficient number of days to enable, consistent with international humanitarian law, the full, rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access, ... and to enable urgent rescue and recovery efforts; ... the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, ... as well as ensuring immediate humanitarian access."

We contend that no nation should deliberately instigate humanitarian crises or jeopardize global peace and stability for its gain. Rather, nations must uphold the principles of global justice, embrace multilateralism, and collaborate toward building a community with a shared future for mankind.

It is incumbent upon the international community to set aside self-serving agendas with joint efforts and acknowledge the increasingly dire humanitarian circumstances in the Gaza Strip. Prioritizing the lives, health, and aspirations for peace and security of the people there, we advocate for an augmentation of humanitarian aid to the region. Nations must eschew actions that exacerbate the crisis, abstain from facilitating illegal activities within Gaza, and vehemently oppose such endeavors.

We believe that the international community can uphold the international order based on international law, defend the fundamental principles and purposes of international relations based on the Charter of the United Nations, and use political, economic, diplomatic, and other measures as provided for in the Charter of the United Nations without discrimination. Only through steadfast adherence to these principles can we believe the current humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip can be effectively addressed.
