



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
20 March 2024

English only

---

## Human Rights Council

### Fifty-fifth session

26 February–5 April 2024

Agenda item 7

**Human rights situation in Palestine and other  
occupied Arab territories**

### **Written statement\* submitted by The Next Century Foundation, 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.

[8 February 2024]

---

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



## **Leveraging Current Events in Gaza into a Realistic and Permanent Peace**

The Next Century Foundation does not wish to palliate the attacks of Hamas against Israel's people on October 7 which were unconscionable. But for more than four months, the people of Gaza have been subjected to bombardment and deprived of basic necessities needed to survive.

It is important to seize this moment as an opportunity for establishing lasting peace for both Israel and the State of Palestine. A concerted effort is vital to leverage current events into a permanent and comprehensive peace that will end the cycle of unresolved conflict and lead to the establishment of an independent, democratic, and viable Palestinian state coexisting peacefully and securely alongside Israel.

A peace process is achievable, and should commence now. Waiting until a permanent ceasefire for steps to be put into place is unnecessary. We endorse calls for a permanent ceasefire. But we regard a peace process as vital.

An immediate effort is needed to find a solution that honours the spirit of UN Security Council Resolution 338 which at a time of war called on all parties to cease all firing and terminate all military activities immediately. Resolution 338 stated that the parties should implement Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) in all of its parts and, immediately and concurrently with the ceasefire, start negotiations with an aim to establish a just and durable peace in the Middle East.

We must not condemn yet another generation to the misery and terror of the existing unresolved situation.

## **Recognition of a Palestinian State**

The international community's recognition of Palestine as a state is also crucial for achieving peace. Such action underpins the international community's commitment to implement the two-state solution, places both nations on an equal footing, and enables respect for each other's internal affairs.

The Next Century Foundation calls for bold diplomacy leading to the recognition of a Palestinian state by the United States of America and the major European powers. We appeal to those states who have already expressed sympathy for the loss of life in both Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel to follow the example of Sweden in recognising a Palestinian state and thus helping to work towards peace and security in both nations; most particularly Switzerland, Spain and Ireland. The recognition of Palestine as a state means that Palestine attains its rightful position in the world community.

Recognition need not be withheld in the absence of a successful peace process with Israel.

## **Restructuring the Palestinian Authority**

The Next Century Foundation urges the establishment of a credible Palestinian Authority, free from external influence, and representative of the full range of political opinion in the State of Palestine.

The existing Palestinian Authority has lost legitimacy, is weak, and increasingly authoritarian. It is essential for any Palestinian-led governance to be respected and sustainable.

The State of Palestine should again be allowed democratic elections for a parliament. Regardless of which, new Palestinian Presidential elections are urgent and long overdue. The current President, Mahmoud Abbas, has now held office for almost twenty years and should allow the Presidential elections to proceed that he suspended in 2021.

However, the absence of any such elections should not be an excuse for any failure to take forward peace negotiations.

## **Israel**

Political change is also necessary in Israel. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition government has failed Israel's people by the lapse in security that helped the perpetrators of the cruel events that occurred on October 7. Most importantly, Premier Netanyahu's strategy to manage the conflict has, whether in Gaza, the West Bank, or at Al-Aqsa Mosque, promoted bitterness amongst Palestinians. His policy of strengthening Hamas while weakening the Palestinian Authority so that there would be no address for possible negotiations was one of the factors which contributed to the tragic situation. These same policies have helped to transform Hamas into a more popular organisation than it had ever been.

The Next Century Foundation calls for a change of political course and leadership in Israel to restore Israel's regional security and ensure a political horizon exists for two states.

## **Peace Process**

The absence of effective leadership in both Israel's government and the Palestinian Authority and the deep mistrust between Israel and the State of Palestine mean that the two nations will be unlikely to agree to the terms of a solution without encouragement.

The Next Century Foundation urges the international community to step up and push for a resolution of the current crisis with a defined goal: the implementation of the two-state solution that will secure an independent Palestinian state and maintain the viability of Israel.

We appeal to the United States of America to promote security in the region by more effectively backing and promoting a Palestine-Israel peace process with tangible steps that lead to the resolution of conflict and the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state.

We urge other global and regional powers, especially those which have diplomatic relations with Israel, to apply pressure in support of a robust peace initiative.

We call specifically on Qatar as the main funder of Gaza, Saudi Arabia as the lead nation in the Islamic World, and Türkiye as a regional member state of NATO, to have the readiness to spearhead a peace process that embraces as a starting point the 2002 Abdullah Plan and subsequent Arab Peace Initiative.

If the international community continues to fail to assume an active role in securing a political settlement that would create a new reality based on the two-state solution, it will contribute to the perpetuation of conflict and suffering on both sides.

## **Governance of Gaza**

The Next Century Foundation suggests putting in place a temporary Palestinian government of technocrats to administer Gaza during an interim period.

The interim governing body in Gaza would not be able to assume its role without appropriate financing, technical assistance, and a corresponding international commitment to rebuild Gaza and accommodate internally displaced refugees.

Meanwhile, Israel should hand over internal security responsibilities for Gaza to any such new and well-funded Palestinian administration. This option upholds Palestinian dignity through Palestinian-led governance while ensuring security for Israel.

The Next Century Foundation then proposes a restructured Palestinian Authority be enabled to administer Gaza as soon as is possible, ideally even before presidential elections take place in Gaza and the West Bank.

## **Border Security**

As the internal rule of Gaza would be Palestinian, The Next Century Foundation proposes a multinational force on the Gaza-Israel border in order to provide security for Israel and Gaza.

Any multinational force would be temporary and be put in place as part of a broader diplomatic framework that fosters the establishment of an independent, democratic Palestinian state and a permanent Israel-Palestine peace agreement.

The Next Century Foundation feels that if the border force is merely Western in nature, it will be dubbed an extension of the occupation and will fail to be accepted by the Palestinian people. We recommend that the multinational force include participation from moderate Arab states and call upon the support of member states of the Abraham Accords, and from Türkiye and Canada, a nation well used to Mid-East peacekeeping, to prepare to step in when the cannons fall silent.

Israelis and Palestinians are two deeply traumatised and brutalised people, and the world is in need of tremendous efforts if its aspiration for peace is to be realised.

## **Prisoner Exchange**

As part of a comprehensive effort to resolve the conflict we call for the exchange of all Palestinian prisoners apprehended without charge, or apprehended for political or quasi-political crimes, in return for Israel's citizens held hostage. This should be an all-for-all exchange involving the release of all of Israel's citizens as well as the non-Israeli prisoners held captive in Gaza.

It should be noted that:

1. We believe that any such prisoner exchange should take place together with Israel's agreement to a permanent ceasefire, an international force, and the initiation of a peace process.
2. We also specifically call for the release of the prominent political figure Marwan Barghouti as part of this exchange. His release is essential if free and fair presidential elections are subsequently to be held in the State of Palestine.
3. The Next Century Foundation would also point out that there is no place for the use of "administrative detention" without trial in a modern democracy.

## **Conclusion**

The horror of attacks on civilians by Hamas and the subsequent bombing of Gaza by Israel are of a different scale and of a different character. But the fundamentals are the same: we must protect civilians and step in to stop bloodshed drowning out the two-state solution. Self-determination for the Palestinian people is the only way to generate security for both Israel and the State of Palestine.

---