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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and
the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-eighth year

Identical letters dated 10 October 2023 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Israel has declared an all-out war on the Palestinian people, ratcheting up its long-running campaign of violence and State terror against the people it has been ruthlessly occupying and persecuting for decades.

Israel's war is being carried out indiscriminately and wantonly, in grave breach of international law, with the explicit purpose of inflicting enormous human loss, suffering and destruction, compounding its massive collective punishment of the Palestinian civilian population it has held captive in Gaza under an inhumane 16-year blockade.

Israel's Defense Minister has openly declared: "We are fighting human animals ... We are imposing a complete siege on Gaza. There will be no electricity, no water, no fuel. Everything will be closed."

Such blatant dehumanization and attempts to bomb a people into submission, to use starvation as a method of warfare and to eradicate their national existence are nothing less than genocidal. These acts constitute war crimes, they are a shocking affront to humanity and must be condemned. Israel, the occupying Power – the Israeli government and military officials, soldiers and settlers – must be held accountable for these crimes to the fullest extent of the law, including international criminal law.

As of the writing of the present letter, Israeli occupying forces continue attacking civilian areas across the Gaza Strip, firing missiles, bombs and artillery by air, land and sea. Violating all rules of international humanitarian law, Israel is deliberately targeting homes, including apartment buildings, refugee camps, hospitals and other medical facilities, schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), mosques, and other civilian properties and infrastructure, including roads, hampering the passage of emergency vehicles and the access of humanitarian personnel to aid the wounded.



Israeli occupying forces have killed and maimed hundreds of Palestinians, including yesterday in an air strike on a market in northern Gaza that killed dozens of innocent people trying to fulfil a most basic human need – food for their families – to sustain them in this nightmare of a war, where every single Palestinian life is in danger by the occupying Power.

At this time, the casualties are estimated at 849 Palestinians killed, including families in their entirety throughout Gaza, and over 5,350 wounded by lethal attacks by Israeli occupying forces in the days since Israel began its onslaught on 7 October. The toll is rising by the minute. The casualties include 19 Palestinians, including 4 children, killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as Israel presses on with its attacks on the civilian population, attacks that were incessant prior to 7 October and are now escalating as it intensifies its onslaught.

The harm being done to children and women is unspeakable. Children are being traumatized and terrorized, orphaned by the hundreds as their parents are murdered before their eyes, displaced as their homes are blown up and reduced to rubble, and are among the dead and wounded, with reports of over 140 children killed. At the time of writing, it is estimated that more than 80 women are also among the dead, with casualty figures still rising.

The mounting death toll and scale of the destruction demand an international reaction first and foremost focused on stopping the bloodshed and saving civilian lives. The targeting of civilians must be halted immediately. International humanitarian law and human rights law must be respected by all.

Humanitarian principles and obligations cannot be abandoned. Civilians must be protected, and life-saving assistance must be allowed to reach them, including through UNRWA that is providing the only safe haven to terrified Palestinian civilians, the majority of refugees, who are fleeing for their lives from the Israeli onslaught that has, as of today, destroyed 22,639 housing units and 10 health facilities and caused damage to at least 48 schools.

Over 137,000 children, women and men are now sheltering in 64 UNRWA schools, among the more than 200,000 people displaced throughout Gaza. We condemn the Israeli missile strikes on two UNRWA schools sheltering displaced families, deepening fears that nowhere in Gaza is safe.

We urge the international community, including the Security Council to act forthwith to fulfil the political, legal, humanitarian and moral obligations invoked by the present crisis in this prolonged injustice. International law must be upheld in word and deed, without selectivity.

Right now, this requires immediate action to stop the violence and to protect the vulnerable civilians whose lives are directly threatened by the Israeli occupation. Moreover, we echo the appeal of the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, that “all relevant actors must allow humanitarian teams and goods to immediately and safely reach the hundreds of thousands of people in need”. The looming catastrophe in Gaza must be averted.

Further destabilization of this grave situation will put millions of civilian lives at risk and will have far-reaching ramifications in the region and beyond. We thus reiterate our calls on the Security Council and all concerned States to exert every effort to bring a halt to this aggression on Gaza as rapidly as possible and to provide protection to the Palestinian people, in accordance with international humanitarian law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The Palestinian people and their leadership seek peace, we always have, but there can never be peace as long as such war crimes and persecution continue. Israel's colonial occupation and abhorrent apartheid regime, including its inhumane blockade on Gaza, must be brought to an end, and the Palestinian people must live as a free people in peace and security in their homeland.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 804 previous letters regarding the ongoing historic injustice against the Palestinian people and the crimes being perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, 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 8 October 2023 ([A/ES-10/952-S/2023/743](#)), 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 must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Riyadh **Mansour**
Minister
Permanent Observer
