



General Assembly Security Council

Distr.: General
23 October 2023

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5

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

Security Council
Seventy-eighth year

Identical letters dated 20 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

In the absence of international action and accountability, Israel, the occupying Power, has pressed on with its depraved military aggression against the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip, inflicting untold horrors and misery, laying waste to entire civilian areas and spreading death and destruction everywhere.

The international community must act. It cannot allow these atrocities to continue. There must be swift, collective action to end this Israeli aggression and siege against the Palestinian people being perpetrated in grave and wanton breach of international law. These are war crimes and crimes against humanity, which no person of conscience or morality should condone or support.

Since my previous letter, the human cost of this unlawful and inhumane onslaught has continued to painfully rise, with casualties suffered every minute and every hour of the day by the Palestinian civilian population. In the course of 24 hours between 18 and 19 October, at least 307 Palestinians were killed by Israeli occupying forces' attacks across Gaza, in the northern, central and southern parts, no area spared by this campaign of State terror against a defenceless civilian population.

According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as at 19 October, the casualty toll in Gaza had risen to at least 3,785 Palestinians killed and 12,500 injured, including 3,983 children and 3,300 women, since this heinous Israeli aggression began. Hundreds more victims remain under the rubble of destroyed homes and buildings, many feared to be children. The numbers of dead and wounded will surely have increased by the time you read the present letter.

Children are bearing an unimaginable toll of death, injury, trauma and terror. They have lost their lives, lost their parents, lost their families, lost their homes, lost their schools and lost their childhoods. Defense for Children International reports that over 1,600 Palestinian children have been killed in attacks by Israeli occupying forces since the aggression on Gaza was launched. Israel is firing missiles, bombs and



artillery at homes and all civilian areas and infrastructure, including United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) shelters for the displaced, leaving nowhere safe in Gaza for a child or any human being.

Women have also been gravely impacted, with at least 1,000 women killed in Israeli attacks. According to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), it is estimated that 900 women have been widowed, sinking them and their families into deeper poverty and want, and over 493,000 women and girls have been displaced from their homes. About 50,000 pregnant women in Gaza are in desperate need of medical care, and, according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), every day around 160 women will give birth amid this harrowing situation, unable to access safe delivery services, as hospitals struggle to care for victims of the Israeli aggression and are quickly running out of medical supplies as Israel's siege on Gaza continues, preventing the entry of desperately needed humanitarian aid, including food, water, medicines and fuel.

Vast destruction is being inflicted on Gaza by Israel as it continues its systematic breaches of international humanitarian law, deliberately attacking civilian areas and objects, including homes, hospitals and religious sites. After Israeli bombardments that damaged or destroyed at least 17 mosques, an Israeli air strike yesterday led to the collapse of the Greek Orthodox church of Saint Porphyrius – the third oldest Christian church in the world – killing 16 Palestinians and wounding 60 other civilians who had been sheltering in the church for protection.

Yesterday, Israel intensified its bombardment of central Gaza, levelling more than 10 residential buildings and towers, and further displacing civilians. Shelling has also continued in the south of Gaza, endangering the civilians residing there and those who sought safety from the Israeli evacuation orders demanding their forcible transfer from their homes and shelters, including UNRWA schools, in the north. Repeated attacks by Israeli occupying forces on UNRWA facilities have resulted in the killing of 8 civilians and injured nearly 100 other civilians who had sought refuge there.

As reported by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as of now, a shocking 30 per cent of all housing units in the Gaza Strip have been either destroyed (12,845), rendered uninhabitable (9,055) or moderately/lightly damaged (121,000), since the start of the Israeli military aggression. More than 1 million people remain internally displaced, including over 527,500 people staying in 147 UNRWA-designated emergency shelters.

Today Israel has demanded that UNRWA evacuate five of its schools. Such actions are compounding the crisis and human misery as thousands and thousands of people are left without protection, crowded into facilities unsuitable to accommodate them, in unsanitary and dire conditions, lacking food, water and essential supplies, including hygiene kits and blankets, leading to increased trauma, fear and tensions.

In grave breach of international humanitarian law, Israel also continues to demand the evacuation of hospitals. The Palestine Red Crescent Society has reported a threat by Israel to strike Al-Quds hospital, and has demanded its immediate evacuation, endangering over 400 patients, 12,000 displaced civilians who went to the hospital compound for safe haven, and medical staff, and raising fears of another massacre such as occurred at the Al-Ahli Baptist hospital on 17 October.

Against this horrific backdrop, Israeli soldiers and settlers continue their violent rampages in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, killing and forcibly displacing Palestinian civilians and carrying on with the land grab. There, at least 83 Palestinians have been killed and at least 1,420 injured since 7 October, including 26 children. The casualties include the killing of 13 Palestinians, including 5 children, in an Israeli assault on Nur Shams refugee camp, where Israeli occupying forces also cut the water

and electricity to the camp, further besieging the population. More than 800 Palestinians, including children and youth, have also been arrested by the Israeli occupying forces in less than 2 weeks. In addition, since 7 October, at least 545 Palestinians, half of them children, have been forcibly displaced from 13 Bedouin communities in the West Bank amid intensified Israeli occupying forces' and settler violence and access restrictions.

This abominable situation cannot continue. We call again upon the international community to take immediate and urgent action to stop Israel's massacres of Palestinian civilians, stop its mass displacement and forced transfer of Palestinians, and end its criminal siege on the Gaza Strip. A ceasefire is of the utmost urgency, and safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to meet the fundamental human needs of our people in Gaza is vital.

We continue to call upon the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities to maintain international peace and security and protect civilians, and call upon the international community as a whole to uphold its legal, political and humanitarian obligations. In this regard, we hope that the call by the Arab Group, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Group, the Non-Aligned Movement and other countries for resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly can mobilize the collective will to bring an end to this deadly, destructive Israeli aggression and hold the perpetrators accountable.

I conclude by drawing attention to a statement dated 19 October by nine independent experts of the Human Rights Council, stressing, *inter alia*:

“We are sounding the alarm: There is an ongoing campaign by Israel resulting in crimes against humanity in Gaza. Considering statements made by Israeli political leaders and their allies, accompanied by military action in Gaza and escalation of arrests and killing in the West Bank, there is also a risk of genocide against the Palestinian People. There are no justifications or exceptions for such crimes. We are appalled by the inaction of the international community in the face of belligerent war-mongering”

The international community must act now to put a halt to this catastrophe against the Palestinian people.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 808 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 17 October 2023 ([A/ES-10/957-S/2023/783](#)) 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) **Riyad Mansour**
Minister, Permanent Observer