



# General Assembly Security Council

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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 19 November 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**

Ignoring the worldwide calls for a ceasefire, the General Assembly call for a humanitarian truce leading to cessation of hostilities and the Security Council call for humanitarian pauses and corridors, Israel continues to wage its vicious war on the Palestinian people under its occupation. The atrocities and terror being wrought by Israel in the Gaza Strip are an affront to humanity that cannot be justified under any pretext. Justifications only give cover to and abet what are blatant war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Though the communications blackout on Gaza is making it difficult to ascertain the exact toll, estimates are that 12,200 Palestinians have been killed, the vast number women (3,250) and children (5,000), more than 29,000 people have been injured and nearly 4,000 are dead or trapped under the rubble. If anything, considering the scale of carnage and devastation, these are underestimates. And these numbers do not include the more than 200 Palestinians killed and nearly 3,000 injured in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, including in recent Israeli attacks on the Jenin, Balata and Dheisheh refugee camps.

This is not self-defence, this is the wholesale slaughter of innocent civilians and destruction of a society in breach of every rule of law and every human norm, rendering Gaza a “graveyard for children”, a “death zone”, “hell on earth”; inflicting a “colossal death toll and destruction of life-sustaining infrastructure” and “a catastrophe of enormous proportions”; where “one out of every 200 inhabitants has been killed”, “no one, and nowhere, is safe”, and “every aspect of life is being systematically eradicated”. This inhumanity must be stopped.

In the past two days alone, three United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) schools sheltering thousands of displaced Palestinian families have been directly attacked by Israel. Al Falah/Zeitoun UNRWA school in Gaza City was struck on 17 November by Israeli fire, causing scores of casualties. Then, on 18 November, Israel attacked Tal Az-Zaatar school in Beit Lahiya and Al-Fakhoura school in Jabaliya, killing at least 66 children, women and men and injuring dozens of others, terrorizing the civilians sheltering at



Al-Fakhoura school, as the school had been targeted earlier in November by Israel in an attack that killed 15 civilians. Since this war began, 17 UNRWA facilities have been directly attacked and 67 facilities impacted by Israeli airstrikes and bombings across Gaza, north and south, killing 176 displaced Palestinians and injuring over 800 people.

How can it be that United Nations shelters, under the United Nations flag, meant to provide safe shelter to terrified displaced civilians, are attacked repeatedly, without consequence? Where else in the world would this be permitted? Where else in the world would over 830,000 people desperate for refuge cram into United Nations schools, tolerating inhuman, undignified conditions only in the belief that they would be safe, and still not be protected?

Where else but Gaza could the vast civilian death toll, which also includes the wiping out of dozens of families consisting of four or five generations, and of over 200 medics, 103 United Nations staff and 41 journalists, frontline workers and human rights defenders, be tolerated? Where else would such depraved impunity be exempted under the offensive excuses of “self-defence” and “tragedy” or “costs of war”?

Israel also keeps demanding Palestinian civilians in the north of Gaza to evacuate to the south, claiming this is “for their safety”, while it carries on with attacks on the south, including strikes today on Nuseirat and Bureij refugee camps, where it killed 31 Palestinians, including two journalists, and injured hundreds.

These evacuation orders are causing the unbearable exodus of tens of thousands more people – in addition to the 1.6 million Palestinian civilians already displaced in Gaza – who are fleeing, mostly on foot, among them hundreds of children, some of them travelling alone, and 2,500 displaced persons, sick and injured patients, doctors and nurses from Al-Shifa Hospital, which has been seized by Israeli occupying forces – to areas where they will clearly not be safe. This forced displacement of our people must be stopped.

This is not self-defence – Israel is the aggressor, its occupation and its presence in the Palestinian land illegitimate, violent and inhumane in every aspect, its hatred for Palestinians explicit in its blatant dehumanization and extermination of Palestinian families. In plain sight, Israel is implementing the “Nakba 2023” that its bloodthirsty officials and settlers are clamouring for, attempting to forcibly expel Palestinians from their land by a campaign of murder and destruction and threats of more to come. They must be stopped.

Twenty-one independent United Nations Special Rapporteurs, Experts and Working Groups, reiterating calls to urgently implement a ceasefire to stop this situation from “spiraling towards a genocide”, have warned of Israel’s “overt intent to destroy the Palestinian people under its occupation”, alongside other stark warnings that “intentional starvation amounts to a war crime”, that “the practice of medicine is being used as a political tool”, that Israel is “using water as a weapon of war” and that it is using evacuation orders “to displace Palestinians from their land with no prospect of returning”. Such forewarnings cannot continue to be ignored.

We therefore reiterate our calls for an immediate ceasefire, the protection of Palestinian civilian population, a halt to the forced transfer of our people, and the provision of unimpeded humanitarian aid at scale to stem the widespread suffering and save civilian lives, including from starvation, dehydration and disease.

Furthermore, concrete follow-up measures by the Security Council and General Assembly are needed to stop Israel’s war crimes and crimes against humanity against the Palestinian people in Gaza and rest of Occupied Palestine. Resolutions alone cannot remedy this grave crisis in Palestine and the risks to the region; they must be

implemented fully and urgently; the law must be upheld. As stated by the Special Rapporteur on the right to health, Tlaleng Mofokeng, “Though the pen may hold powers, world leaders have much more than the pen and must utilize all available avenues and responsibilities entrusted upon them for prevention, recourse and justice”.

In this regard, the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions have specific obligations to act, as do the States parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. There must be independent investigations and must be accountability for all the crimes perpetrated. There must be sanctions, in accordance with international law, to pressure Israel to stop this savage war and to end its illegal, colonial apartheid occupation. The Palestinian leadership thus pleads once again with the international community to act now, on principle, conscience and obligation, to stop this inhuman aggression on our people.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 815 letters on 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 15 November 2023 ([A/ES-10/969-S/2023/878](#)) 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 against our 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 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