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

Security Council
Seventy-ninth year

Identical letters dated 12 February 2024 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

I write again with extreme urgency to reiterate our appeal for urgent international mobilization to stop Israel's genocidal war against the Palestinian people.

Three days ago, we called again for immediate international action, warning in particular of Israel's threats to carry out an assault on Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, where over 1.3 million displaced families, hungry, exhausted and terrified, have fled, sheltering atop the quarter of a million residents of the city. We urged the Security Council in specific to protect millions of civilian lives in danger across Gaza and the rest of Occupied Palestine, but our pleas have been to no avail.

Emboldened by the Council's continued paralysis and the cover given to it by some permanent members, Israel has in fact launched its threatened invasion of Rafah, killing more than 164 people and injuring hundreds more in the span of these two days. Among the victims are babies who were born in recent months and whose entire existence was lived in the midst of a genocide and the terror, trauma, starvation and misery inflicted by Israel on them and their families.

No legitimate justification can be offered by Security Council members for failing their duties – not only to Palestine, but to the international community as a whole – in the face of Israel's slaughter of children, women and men and infliction of a humanitarian catastrophe unparalleled in this century. Flimsy excuses, cynical pretexts and empty calls on Israel, the occupying Power, to respect international law while actually permitting and enabling it to continue its wanton attacks on civilian areas and starvation of the population are the height of hypocrisy, negligence and complicity.

The demand for an immediate ceasefire, at a minimum on humanitarian grounds, is the least the Council can do after over four months of allowing Israel to commit this carnage, in grave breach of every international legal norm, standard and principle and any sense of morality.



The Security Council cannot remain on the sidelines while fighter jets, gunships, tanks and snipers attack defenceless, scared and desperate Palestinian civilians who have nowhere else to flee for safety. Israel's demand for "evacuation" of the nearly 1.5 million civilians in Rafah – over half of Gaza's population and 600,000 of them children – is inhumane, illegal and impossible. Its continued attempts to force their removal are part of its blatant plans to ethnically cleanse Gaza of its inhabitants, a stated aim of many Israeli officials and the public that they have incited. This must be stopped.

The Council cannot continue to shirk its responsibility to halt this deadly onslaught and protect the civilian lives that are in danger. It cannot allow international peace and security to be threatened at will by Israel, allowing it to behave as a rogue State, shielded from accountability for its crimes. Only swift action can prevent further deterioration with grave reverberations.

The casualty toll inflicted by Israel in Gaza is now at 28,340 Palestinian children, women, men, youth and elderly persons massacred, as well as medics, humanitarian personnel and journalists, and more than 68,000 people injured. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Israel's occupying forces and settler militias have killed 390 Palestinians, among them 102 children, and injured 4,500. In addition, thousands of Palestinians, mostly men and boys, have been rounded up, arrested, violently interrogated, dehumanized, tortured and imprisoned, with dozens executed, since 7 October.

How can such destruction of human life ever be justified? How can the world's conscience ever be redeemed in the face of this genocide? How can this stain on humanity ever be cleansed?

How can anyone justify the slaughter of more than 12,300 children – babies, toddlers, elementary school children, teenagers, siblings – who are supposed to be protected at all costs, with special protections accorded to them under international humanitarian law and human rights law?

How can anyone justify continued attacks on hospitals, including Al-Amal and Nasser Hospitals in Khan Younis, which are under siege by Israeli soldiers, attacks on doctors and medical personnel, including Palestine Red Crescent medics targeted in their ambulances, as they struggle to save lives and treat the most gruesome wounds of injured civilians in the most horrific circumstances?

How can anyone justify the continued collective punishment, deprivation and starvation of the Palestinian people under Israel's brutal occupation as its forces and its extremist protesters continue deliberately obstructing food, water and medicines from reaching civilians? When will the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention deem it worthy to act? When will the Security Council uphold its sacred duty?

We demand that the Security Council and all States act now to uphold their legal and moral obligations, before it is too late, before human life in Gaza is further devastated and international law is further shredded and rendered obsolete. The Palestinian people must be protected from Israel's genocidal onslaught and never-ending attempts to ethnically cleanse them and colonize their land.

On behalf of our people, we therefore again plead for all efforts, whether collectively or individually, to halt Israel's war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide against our people and end this abhorrent colonial occupation and apartheid regime once and for all.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 826 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 9 February 2024 (A/ES-10/983-S/2024/157) 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 an official 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
