PRESS BRIEFING NOTES | OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Israel -Occupied Palestinian Territory situation, 100 days on

12 January 2024

Share



FROM

Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Liz Throssell

LOCATION

Geneva

This Sunday will mark 100 days since Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups launched their horrific attack on Israel, in which 1,200 people, mostly Israelis, were killed and around 250 taken hostage.

Over these past 14 weeks, as Israel has pursued a massive and destructive military response, more than 23,000 Palestinians have been killed, some two-thirds of them women and children. Civilian infrastructure in Gaza, including homes, hospitals, schools, bakeries, places of worship, water systems, as well as the UN's own facilities, have been widely damaged or destroyed.

As UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk has repeatedly urged, there must be an immediate ceasefire – on human rights and humanitarian grounds. A ceasefire to end the appalling suffering and loss

of life, and to allow the prompt and effective delivery of humanitarian aid to a population facing shocking levels of hunger and disease.

This is more urgent than ever.

On the conduct of hostilities, we have repeatedly highlighted Israel's recurring failures to uphold the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law: distinction, proportionality, and precautions in carrying out attacks. The High Commissioner has stressed that breaches of these obligations risk exposure to liability for war crimes, and has also warned of the risks of other atrocity crimes.

Intense Israeli bombardments from air, land and sea are continuing across much of the Gaza Strip, particularly in the Deir al Balah and Khan Yunis governorates, where tens of thousands of civilians had previously fled in search of safety.

The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) must take immediate measures to protect civilians fully in line with Israel's obligation under international law. Ordering civilians to relocate in no way absolves the IDF of its obligations to protect those who remain, regardless of their reasons, while carrying out its military operations.

Hundreds of Palestinians have reportedly been arbitrarily detained in several unknown locations, both within and outside Gaza – in many cases amounting to enforced disappearance. Some of those released have alleged ill-treatment and torture at the hands of the IDF. Israel must immediately end arbitrary detention, torture, ill-treatment and enforced disappearance of Palestinians in Gaza, and must independently and effectively investigate such acts, prosecute any perpetrators, and prevent recurrence.

It is a desperate scenario in northern Gaza, where people face dire shortages of food, water and other basic necessities. Access to humanitarian aid remains extremely difficult, despite repeated pleas by the UN to the IDF to facilitate movement of humanitarian aid convoys.

The situation in southern Gaza is becoming untenable, with over 1.3 million internally displaced people crammed into Rafah, which before the current escalation of hostilities had 300,000 inhabitants.

Meanwhile, Palestinian armed groups have continued to launch indiscriminate rockets towards Israel, with some intercepted. According to the Israeli authorities, around 136 people are still being held in Gaza by Palestinian armed groups.

In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the UN Human Rights Office has verified the deaths of 330 Palestinians, including 84 children, from 7 October 2023 to 10 January 2024. Of these, 321 were killed by Israeli Security forces, eight killed by settlers and one either by Israeli forces or settlers. In parallel, entire herding communities have been forcibly displaced due to settler violence, which may amount to forcible transfer.

As we stressed in our report in December on the West Bank, there needs to be an immediate end to the use of military weapons and methods during law enforcement operations, an end to arbitrary detention and ill-treatment of Palestinians, and the lifting of discriminatory movement restrictions. Lack of accountability for unlawful killings remains pervasive, as does impunity for settler violence, in violation of Israel's obligations as the occupying power to ensure safety of Palestinians in the West Bank.

The UN Human Rights Office for the Occupied Palestinian Territory continues to monitor and document the human rights situation in Gaza and the West Bank. We will submit two reports to the UN Human Rights Council during its next session – which begins in late February – on accountability and settlements.

We also reiterate our call for UN Human Rights Office staff to have access to Israel and all parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory to investigate human rights violations by all parties.

For more information and media requests, please contact:

In Geneva
Liz Throssell + 41 22 917 9296 / **elizabeth.throssell@un.org**
Ravina Shamdasani - + 41 22 917 9169 / **ravina.shamdasani@un.org**
Marta Hurtado - + 41 22 917 9466 / **marta.hurtadogomez@un.org**

Tag and share

Twitter @UNHumanRights
Facebook unitednationshumanrights
Instagram @unitednationshumanrights

Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel

See all Media coverage of the situation

Tags

Israel Palestine Conflicts and violence

Related

STATEMENTS

Comment by UN Human Rights Chief on unfolding situation in Israel and Gaza

PRESS RELEASES

High Commissioner for Human Rights notes significant increase in violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

PRESS RELEASES

UN Human Rights Chief urges States to defuse “powder keg” situation in Israel and OPT, as incalculable suffering, massive death tolls take hold

VIEW THIS PAGE IN:

العربية

Global Social Channels

Latest

Feature Stories

Media Center

Meetings & Events

Resources

Databases

Library

Publications

Connect

Contact Us

Follow us

Work With Us

Donate

Contact

Copyrights

Privacy Policy

Terms of use