MEDIA STATEMENT

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
Occupied Palestinian Territory

UN Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Ramallah

25 April 2025

Deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

For the past 18 months, hostilities in Gaza and severe restrictions on humanitarian assistance, which now include a complete blockade, have devastated the lives of 2.2 million Palestinians, and nearly all essential infrastructure that civilians depend on for survival has been destroyed. Since the collapse of the ceasefire, and during the past week in particular, Israeli attacks on Palestinians have accelerated, claiming the lives of countless civilians and further risking the complete destruction of what little infrastructure remains. The dire conditions for civilians have been further exacerbated by displacement orders and Israel's renewed complete blockade of the Gaza Strip that has stopped the flow of life saving, critical assistance from reaching increasingly desperate civilians.

In parallel, rampant settler violence and operations conducted by Israeli security forces in the West Bank are continuing to kill or injure Palestinians and are resulting in the forced displacement of Palestinians from their homes or shelters in many areas.

Attacks in Gaza

What little remains of Gaza's critical life-saving infrastructure is collapsing under the conditions inflicted by Israel. Israel's complete closure of Gaza, preventing lifesaving assistance from reaching civilians - including food and fuel - has now entered its eighth week. Bakeries have stopped functioning due to the lack of flour and cooking fuel; the prices of basic food items are soaring; and Israeli attacks at sea continue to decimate Gaza's fishing industry. With food aid halted, remaining stocks in Gaza are rapidly depleting, rendering the strip's population, especially vulnerable groups and children, at growing risk of starvation.

As the population becomes increasingly desperate due to the scarcity of food and other vital provisions, social unrest is deepening further, with frequent reports of disputes breaking out within the community involving the use of firearms. This takes place in an environment where the law enforcement and justice system has been systematically dismantled by Israeli attacks and the targeting of civilian officials of the local administration.

The Israeli military also continues targeting civilian objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population. Between 21 and 22 April, the Israeli military conducted deliberate and coordinated attacks across three governorates in Gaza, resulting in the destruction of 36 heavy machines, including excavators, water trucks, and sewer suction tanks. These were being used by Gaza municipalities for humanitarian relief operations, such as rubble removal, water distribution, and maintenance of vital sanitation systems. The destruction of these vehicles is likely to significantly hinder rescue operations, including retrieval of the injured and killed from under the rubble, clearance of debris to allow the movement of ambulances, as well as delivery of safe drinking water, solid waste collection, and the operation of sewage systems – further risking outbreaks of disease. Intentional attacks on civilian objects, that is, objects that are not used for

military action and whose destruction does not offer a definite military advantage at the moment of the attack, are unlawful and constitute a war crime under international humanitarian law.

The Israeli military also continues striking the shelters of Palestinians in Gaza. Between 18 March and 22 April, the UN Human Rights office for the Occupied Palestinian Territory recorded 229 attacks on residential buildings and 91 attacks on tents of internally displaced people (IDP) in Gaza, most resulting in fatalities, including many children and women. For instance, at around midnight on 18 April, the Israeli military is reported to have struck two residential buildings belonging to the Maqdad and the Nasio families in Tal Az-Za'atar, North Gaza, killing 13 Palestinians, including 8 children and a journalist, Tamer Maqdad, and injuring others. On 24 April, at around 0300 hours, the Israeli Air Force reportedly hit a house, in Ash Shaikh Redwan, Gaza City, killing two boys and a girl along with their parents. Among these attacks, 36 strikes on IDP tents were reported to have taken place in Al Mawasi area in southern Gaza in which the Israeli military has repeatedly ordered residents of other areas to relocate.

Persistent Israeli military attacks on civilians and civilian objects have continued throughout Gaza in violation of the core principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack required by international humanitarian law. Extremely high civilian casualties over 18 months do not appear to have prompted any changes in Israeli targeting practices and policies, a pattern indicating at the very least a complete disregard for the lives of civilians in Gaza. Matched with Israel's policy of deliberately blocking life-saving assistance from entering the Gaza Strip, these policies appear to be aimed at punishing the civilian population of Gaza and inflicting on them conditions of life increasingly incompatible with their continued existence as a group in Gaza.

Third States must act according to their clear and unambiguous obligations under international law to ensure that such conduct ceases immediately and to search for and bring to justice perpetrators of crimes under international law.

Renewed wave of settler violence across the West Bank

In the West Bank, high levels of settler violence against Palestinians continue, causing death, injuries and loss of property and undermining Palestinian lives and livelihoods in many areas. On 23 April, Israeli settlers reportedly attacked Palestinians and their property in Khirbet al-Tell area of Sinjil village, Ramallah, resulting in the injury of eight young Palestinian men and the destruction of three agricultural structures. According to information gathered, Israeli security forces prevented emergency crews from reaching the wounded and extinguishing the fire. On 21 April, around 200 settlers burned three houses in the same community and stole sheep belonging to Palestinians, prompting confrontations with residents attempting to defend their properties.

Concerning incidents of settler violence resulting in Palestinian injuries and destruction of property were also recorded in other parts of the West Bank. In Bardala village in northern Jordan Valley, between 23 and 24 April, Israeli settlers reportedly injured seven Palestinians with live ammunition and set fire to residential tents and livestock shelters, while Israeli security forces delayed access of Palestinian ambulances to the area. On 17 April in Al-Rakeez village of Massafer Yatta, South Hebron Hills, a 60-year-old Palestinian man had his leg amputated after Israeli settlers shot him following an attempt to move a fence they had constructed around his land. Following the incident, Israeli security forces arrived at the scene and arrested the man's 16-year-old son, claiming he had assaulted military personnel.

Israeli security forces continued the practice of unlawful killings and large-scale operations in the Northern West Bank

Over the past week, Israeli security forces killed three Palestinians who were throwing stones, including two children. This raised 192 the number of children killed by Israeli security forces in the West Bank since 7 October 2023. On 23 April, Israeli security forces opened fire at a group of children and killed a 12-year-old Palestinian boy with a bullet in the back after they threw stones at military armoured vehicles in Yamoun town, Jenin. On 17 April, Israeli security forces killed two Palestinians, including a 16-year-old boy and a 19-year-old man, who were throwing stones at a highway in Osarin village, Nablus.

Lethal force may only be used if it is strictly unavoidable to protect life; if other, less extreme measures could be used to achieve this objective, then the use of such lethal force constitutes an arbitrary deprivation of life.

Meanwhile, the large-scale operation in the northern West Bank entered its third month, with Israeli security forces continuing to prevent Palestinians from returning to their homes in the refugee camps of Jenin and Tulkarm, while carrying out widespread destruction coupled with the creation of pathways and barriers inside the camps and conducting daily raids on Palestinian towns and villages. With every day this operation continues, the prospect that Palestinians in affected camps will be able to return to their homes is diminishing, risking the permanent displacement of Palestinians from key West Bank population centres, amounting to forcible transfer.

ENDS

For more information and media requests, please contact:
Yusra Jamous- yusra.jamous@un.org
OHCHR-OPT-MEDIA ohchr-opt-media@un.org

Tag and share
Twitter @OHCHR_Palestine
Facebook UN Human Rights Palestine