MEDIA STATEMENT

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

UN Human Rights in Occupied Palestinian Territory

Ramallah

15 October 2025

Gaza: ongoing violations and risks to civilians

Concerns about violations of Palestinians' rights under international law persist with increasing reports of Hamas and affiliated armed groups engaging in extrajudicial executions, as well as continued killings of civilians by the Israeli military in the vicinity of areas where their troops remain deployed.

Concerns about unlawful conduct by Hamas and affiliated armed groups

Since 10 October, armed clashes have intensified between Hamas and groups affiliated with it and rival groups and families, some of whom are reportedly supported by the Israeli military.

On 13 October, the Sahm Unit, allegedly affiliated with the Gaza Ministry of Interior, published video footage apparently showing the public summary execution of eight blindfolded and handcuffed men from the same family in Gaza City. This incident was reportedly in retaliation for an exchange of fire between members of the family and persons affiliated with Hamas the day before.

The Sahm Unit has publicly announced operations to allegedly "cleanse criminals" from another family, also in Gaza City, and claimed to have killed two alleged "collaborators" in the area.

Two years of relentless Israeli bombardment have dismantled Gaza's governance and law enforcement structures. While restoring public order is an urgent priority, responses must fully comply with international human rights standards, particularly the strict limitations on the use of lethal force in the context of law enforcement and the prohibition of summary or extrajudicial execution. The carrying out of executions without a previous judgement pronounced by a regularly constituted court, offering all judicial guarantees, also amounts to a war crime.

The UN Human Rights office in the Occupied Palestinian Territory reminds Hamas that they must respect international human rights norms and standards when their conduct affects the rights of persons under their control. Hamas must prevent and repress any violation or abuse committed by its members.

Civilian killings around redeployment lines

Israeli forces have redeployed from certain areas while maintaining control of more than 50% of Gaza, including almost all of Rafah and large parts of Khan Younis, Beit Lahiya, Beit Hanoun, as well as parts of Gaza City. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are moving back to the areas from which they were displaced, including to areas in close proximity to the remaining Israeli ground forces.

On the morning of 14 October, Israeli military reportedly fired on Palestinians attempting to return to their homes in Ash Shuja'iya, eastern Gaza City, killing three. Later that day, the Israeli military stated its forces shot and killed individuals in northern Gaza who crossed "the withdrawal line" after ignoring Israeli warning.

So far, since 10 October, the Office has recorded 15 Palestinians killed in such areas.

The Israeli military remains bound by international humanitarian law's principles of distinction, proportionality, and precautions. The targeting of civilians not directly participating in hostilities constitutes a war crime regardless of the location of the incident and its proximity to agreed deployment lines. The Israeli military must take immediate measures to ensure its rules of engagement prevent further unlawful killings.

"The situation in Gaza remains precarious and uncertain. It is imperative to ensure that the ceasefire holds and progresses to recovery and the full realisation of Palestinians' right to self-determination," said Ajith Sunghay, Head of the UN Human Rights office in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. "It is equally imperative to ensure that recovery efforts, including the restoration of public order and civil life, comply with international law protections of Palestinians' human rights."

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