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Agenda item 2

**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner  
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the  
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

### **Written statement\* submitted by Human Rights Now, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[03 February 2025]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.

## **Four Issues of Continuing Concern Must be Addressed Beyond the Gaza Ceasefire Agreement**

Human Rights Now (HRN) welcomes the ceasefire of the 15-month-long conflict in Gaza, Phase 1 of which calls for a suspension of hostilities, the return of Gaza residents, the entry of 600 relief trucks a day, the release by Hamas of 33 of the nearly 100 remaining Israeli hostages, and the release by Israel of about 2,000 Palestinian prisoners. Phase 2 involves a permanent end to fighting, withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza, and all remaining Israeli hostages being returned, and Phase 3 involves the rebuilding of Gaza. Despite this progress, HRN identifies four areas of continuing concern that must be addressed to ensure sustainable peace and justice in Gaza.

1. The scale of need for humanitarian aid and rebuilding following Gaza's devastation is immense

The needs for physical, economic, and social reconstruction of Gaza are staggering. Over 47,000 Palestinians were reportedly killed, the majority women and children, with another 10,000 estimated to still be buried in rubble.[1] A credible academic estimate for total Palestinian deaths accounting for under-reporting is 64,260.[2] Over 2 million Palestinians in Gaza have been displaced, most facing significant trauma and lost family members, social networks, and work.[3] About 90% of residences are destroyed or uninhabitable, and most of Gaza's civilian infrastructure is unusable, including hospitals, schools, and water, sanitation, and electricity systems.[4] To begin, Israel has a duty under international law to provide reparations to Palestine for internationally wrongful acts it has committed in Gaza, as do states that aided or assisted Israel in their commission.[5] There are challenges to even deliver basic aid, including the mass displacement and destroyed storage warehouses obstructing aid to people in dire need of food and housing security. There are also deep concerns about securing sufficient resources to enable reconstruction, and that complications (described below) may prevent or delay Phase 3 reconstruction. Starting from 30 January 2025, Israel's ban on all activities inside Israel and occupied East Jerusalem of UNRWA, the principal organization administering humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in Gaza, will, if fully implemented, also greatly impede humanitarian efforts in Gaza with devastating consequences for the population.[6] Israel has no right to interfere with UN premises or to obstruct UNRWA's activities in occupied Palestinian territory.[7] Israel and states must contribute significant resources, as reparations or aid as relevant, to address Gaza's humanitarian crisis and rebuilding needs.

2. Progress of the ceasefire plan is fragile

Mutual distrust and destabilizing elements may delay or obstruct the start of Phase 2.[8] This includes violence committed by an Israeli strike in Gaza before Phase 1 even began,[9] an Israeli army raid in Jenin camp in the West Bank killing 10 Palestinians,[10] and continuing settler violence with impunity,[11] demonstrating a lack of strong political will for peace. There is also serious political resistance in Israel's government against progress, including pressure from hardliners to topple Prime Minister Netanyahu's government if it agrees to a permanent end to hostilities in Gaza[12] and Netanyahu's statements that he may not honor the agreement and that he resists pulling forces out of Gaza.[13] An advisor to US President Trump contributed to this resistance by pledging the Trump administration will continue US support to Israel "in doing what it has to do" if Hamas reneges on the agreement.[14] States should use their leverage to ensure that the ceasefire agreement is implemented without complication, obstruction, or delay.

3. The ceasefire plan fails to address the continuing apartheid-like conditions of Palestinians

In September 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued its Advisory Opinion ruling that the government of Israel had subjected Palestinians in the West Bank to illegal segregation and discrimination.[15] The government of Israel also perpetuated severe social

and economic restrictions and hardships in Gaza due to its blockade, control of infrastructure systems, and other effective means of control even before the Gaza conflict and humanitarian disaster. These patterns of legal, social, and economic discrimination under the control of the Israeli government may continue despite the ceasefire agreement, and they must end.

4. Massive violations against Palestinians by Israel's military occurred in the Gaza conflict, and some are continuing

There is significant evidence for massive violations against Palestinians in the Gaza conflict documented and analyzed by reputable expert organizations, including credible allegations of genocide, forced mass displacement, indiscriminate mass killings of civilians, targeted destruction of civilian objects including residences and health facilities, inhuman treatment of detainees, and other crimes against humanity and widespread war crimes.[16] South Africa brought a case to the ICJ against Israel for violations of the Genocide Convention, and the ICJ issued multiple orders to Israel's government which it flagrantly ignored.[17] The ICC prosecutor has also issued arrest warrants against Netanyahu and former Israeli Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant for crimes under the ICC statute.[18] It is important that on-going violations immediately end (including continued alleged targeted killings of Palestinians after the ceasefire[19] and continuing impediments on medical evacuations[20] and humanitarian relief by not revoking anti-UNRWA legislation, violating international humanitarian law and constituting a form of ongoing genocide) and that soldiers and officials be held accountable for past violations to prevent a culture of impunity perpetuating ongoing and future violations.

#### Recommendations

HRN calls on Israeli authorities to fully address each of the above issues, including to:

- End its occupation of Gaza and the West Bank and any form of legal, social, and economic discrimination and apartheid-like conditions for Palestinians;
- Support and fund the physical and economic rebuilding of Gaza; and
- Immediately end and ensure accountability for violations committed in the Gaza conflict by Israeli forces and officials with fair and independent processes or by cooperating with international processes in good faith.

We also call on the international community of states and organizations to support Palestinians, including to:

- Support and contribute significantly to the physical and economic rebuilding of Gaza;
- Support international accountability processes in official statements and actions, and respect them by cooperating with court orders, arrest warrants, and other measures; and
- Take effective measures against the government of Israel to pressure it to meet its international obligations, including to end its illegal occupation and to immediately end and ensure accountability for serious violations in the Gaza conflict.

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