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**Human rights situation in Palestine and other
occupied Arab territories**

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.

[04 August 2025]

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

The Government of Israel Must Immediately End its Illegal Blockade of and Attacks on Gaza, Occupied Palestinian Territory

Human Rights Now (HRN) condemns the government of Israel's continuing restrictions and barriers on food and humanitarian aid entering the Gaza Strip that have created a famine and humanitarian catastrophe, as well as the Israeli military's continuing attacks on civilians in Gaza and Israel's continued illegal occupation of Palestinian territory. We call on the international community to act with the greatest urgency and take effective measures, including economic and other sanctions and an embargo on weapons and other military materiel, to compel Israel to end its military assault on Gaza, ensure full access to food and humanitarian aid for the population, and end its illegal blockade of Gaza and occupation of Palestinian territory.

1. Deliberate Starvation of the Population in Gaza by the Israeli Government

In its July 29 update, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) concluded that "the worst-case scenario of Famine is currently playing out in the Gaza Strip", with conflict and displacement having intensified and access to food and other essential items and services plummeting to unprecedented levels.[1] This has created conditions, backed by mounting evidence, of widespread starvation, malnutrition, and disease increasing hunger-related deaths, with the Famine threshold having been reached for food consumption in most of the Gaza Strip and for acute malnutrition in Gaza City. The update reiterated the IPC's May report which stated that malnutrition was expected to reach critical levels (IPC Phase 4) in Northern Gaza, Gaza, and Rafah, with more than 70,000 cases of children under the age of five and 17,000 cases of pregnant and breastfeeding women facing acute malnutrition across the Gaza Strip. The UN World Food Program further warned that almost one-third of Gaza's population has gone days without eating.[2]

Most shockingly, Israeli and private security forces have shot live fire at Palestinians waiting to receive food aid, with at least 1,373 Palestinians killed from May 27 until August 1 while seeking food, mostly by the Israeli military.[3]

As noted in a recent joint statement by aid groups attempting to bring food and aid into Gaza, responsibility for the famine conditions lies squarely with Israeli authorities, which have continually blocked and restricted food and humanitarian aid entering the Gaza Strip.[4] This includes a complete blockade on food entering Gaza from March until late May. Since June, food distribution has been restricted to only four distribution points, completely inadequate to meet the needs of the 2.1 million population spread throughout the Gaza Strip. Under international pressure, Israeli authorities announced on July 26 that they would open humanitarian corridors, and food aid has since been airdropped.[5] However, airdrops are humiliating and dangerous for the population and do not meet minimum humanitarian needs.[6]

The Israeli government's decision to resort to airdrops, in order to continue refusing the opening of road crossings, was described by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) Commissioner "as highly costly, insufficient and inefficient." [7] He further noted that "If there is political will to allow airdrops ... there should be similar political will to open the road crossings," and he reported that UNRWA has 6,000 trucks loaded with food and waiting for the Israeli government's permission to enter Gaza, which it continues to refuse. Israel's ongoing restrictions on aid are in direct violation of the International Court of Justice's provisional orders in March 2024 and May 2024, which require Israel to ensure, without delay and in full co-operation with the United Nations, the unhindered provision at scale of basic services and humanitarian assistance.

Critically, health experts have noted that even if full access to food aid is allowed, it will be too late for children suffering from prolonged severe malnutrition, which creates irreversible and permanent damage to their health even with access to food.[8]

2. Continuing Attacks by Israel's Military against Civilians

The Israeli military continues to target civilian areas with airstrikes and other attacks that continue to kill civilians, mostly women and children, in high numbers. Over a 48 hour period from July 30 to 31, 300 Palestinians were estimated to have been killed by multiple airstrikes across the Gaza Strip.[9] In one of the airstrikes on July 31, a school in west Gaza City converted into a shelter was struck by a missile killing at least 15 displaced Palestinians, mainly women and children, the majority from the same family.[10] Comparable attacks by Israel's military continue to kill comparable numbers of Palestinian civilians virtually daily. In April 2025 it was reported by the International Organization for Migration that over 90% of residences in Gaza were already destroyed.[11]

On July 29, Palestinian health authorities reported just over 60,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed since the start of the conflict.[12] A report by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine has warned that the number of deaths may be significantly underreported, with the number of killed already exceeding 70,000 by October 2024.[13]

3. Attacks on International Organizations and Officials Calling for Accountability

The conduct by the Israeli military and authorities summarized above constitute grave violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including widespread war crimes, crimes against humanity[14] and, in combination with patterns of conduct and express statements of Israeli authorities indicating their intent, of genocide.[15] It is imperative that Israeli officials responsible for such crimes be held accountable.

However, international organizations and officials reporting on the government of Israel's crimes and facilitating its accountability have been targeted for retribution. This includes sanctions by the US administration against the International Criminal Court[16] and Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese.[17] The three members of the Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), Navi Pillay, Chris Sidoti, and Miloon Kothari, have also resigned under the shadow of this retribution.[18] The targeting of international organizations and officials for retribution for their official work is unacceptable.

On July 25, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu made statements indicating an intention to abandon negotiations for a ceasefire to the conflict and to consider "alternative" options to achieve its goals for Gaza unilaterally, which have created serious and credible concerns of further crimes against humanity and genocide including those related to ethnic cleansing.

4. The Continuing Dispossession and Apartheid of Palestinians

At the root of the conflict is the continuing dispossession and apartheid of Palestinians. On July 23, Israel's Knesset voted 71-13 in favor of annexing the West Bank in a non-binding but politically important decision.[19] The vote flagrantly defies the ICJ's July 2024 advisory opinion, which confirmed that the Israeli government's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza is illegal and that Israeli legislation and measures towards Palestinians and Palestinian territory violate the international prohibition on racial segregation and apartheid.[20] The government of Israel has continually defied the advisory opinion and ICJ provisional orders, and it has taken no steps to end its illegal occupation and apartheid rules.

Several states have newly recognized or stated an intention to recognize the state of Palestine in recent weeks, including France, the United Kingdom, and Canada, and we urge the remaining states that have yet to recognize the state of Palestine to do so, and for all states to respect all the rights of Palestine as a fully sovereign state.

5. Steps Must Be Taken to End the Government of Israel's Crimes

HRN condemns the actions of the Israeli government and military which have led to famine in Gaza and which constitute widespread war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, and we deplore their and the US government's flagrant defiance and undermining of international organizations and officials which have called for accountability and compliance with international obligations.

We demand that the government of Israel:

- Immediately end its military assault on Gaza and its commission of genocide, and other international crimes, against the Palestinian people;
- Fulfill its obligation to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure in Gaza;
- Remove all barriers to the entry of food and humanitarian aid into Gaza and facilitate full access to the aid by all Palestinians, in full co-operation with the United Nations;
- End its illegal occupation of the OPT.

We further call on the international community and all states to:

- Immediately implement effective measures, including economic sanctions and embargoes on military materiel, to compel the Israeli government to end its violations of international law against the Palestinian people and facilitate the unimpeded flow of aid into Gaza;
- Support accountability measures against Israeli officials for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide;
- Officially recognize the state of Palestine.

[1] <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/countries-in-focus-archive/issue-133/en/>

[2] <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ckgig81qqwvo>

[3] <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/08/1165552>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/videos/cy8k8045nx9o>

[4] <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/23/world/middleeast/aid-groups-gaza-starvation.html>

[5] <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn437jjygl9o>

[6] <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6804>

[7] <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-commissioner-general-gaza-airdrops-are-least-100-times-more-costly-than-trucks>

[8] <https://www.npr.org/2025/07/27/nx-s1-5479775/doctors-warn-that-children-in-gaza-have-suffered-irreversible-damage-from-starvation>; <https://www.nbcnews.com/world/gaza/hunger-gaza-tipping-point-israel-children-starvation-malnutrition-rcna221653>

[9] Dawn News, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHSsTMmUdIk>

[10] Id.

[11] <https://www.dailysabah.com/world/mid-east/over-90-of-homes-in-gaza-destroyed-by-israel-un>

[12] <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/how-many-palestinians-has-israels-gaza-offensive-killed-2025-03-24/>

[13] <https://www.cnn.com/2025/01/09/middleeast/gaza-death-toll-underreported-study-intl>

[14] <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/11/14/israels-crimes-against-humanity-gaza>

[15] <https://www.bu.edu/articles/2024/is-israel-committing-genocide-in-gaza/>

[16] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2025/03/what-do-the-trump-administrations-sanctions-on-the-icc-mean-for-justice-and-human-rights/>

[17] <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/07/1165359>

[18] <https://www.timesofisrael.com/three-members-of-un-commission-investigating-israel-resign-amid-trump-crackdown/>

[19] <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/7/23/israeli-parliament-approves-symbolic-motion-on-west-bank-annexation>

[20] <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/07/experts-hail-icj-declaration-illegality-israels-presence-occupied>