



DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

Bulletin

on action by the United Nations system and
intergovernmental organizations
relevant to the question of Palestine

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*The Bulletin can be found in the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) on the Internet at:
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I. UN SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT THE ONGOING ESCALATION BETWEEN PALESTINIAN MILITANTS AND ISRAEL

On 5 August, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, issued the following [statement](#).

I am deeply concerned by the ongoing escalation between Palestinian militants and Israel, including the targeted killing today of a Palestinian Islamic Jihad leader inside Gaza. This takes place amidst mounting tensions across the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip in recent weeks.

In the past few hours, at least 10 Palestinians were killed by Israeli airstrikes. I am deeply saddened by reports that a five-year-old child has been killed in these strikes. There can be no justification for any attacks against civilians.

The continuing escalation is very dangerous. The launching of rockets must cease immediately, and I call on all sides to avoid further escalation.

The progress made in gradually opening Gaza since the end of the May escalation risks being undone, leading to even greater humanitarian needs at a time when global resources are stretched and international financial support for a renewed humanitarian effort in Gaza will not be easily available.

The UN is fully engaged with all concerned in an attempt to avoid a further conflict which would have devastating consequences, mainly for civilians.

The responsibility is with the parties to avoid this from happening.

II. UNICEF RAISES ALARM AS PALESTINIAN GIRL KILLED AND A BOY INJURED IN THE GAZA STRIP

On 5 August, the UNICEF Regional Director Adele Khodr issued the following [statement](#).

Ala'a, a five-year-old Palestinian girl was killed, and at least one boy was injured in the Gaza Strip in an escalation of violence earlier today.

“Last year, 67 children were killed in the Gaza Strip during the 11-day wave of violence and two children were killed in Israel.

“Children have witnessed far too much, for far too long. Many have known nothing but violence, conflict and war. Most live with the long-term psychosocial impact on their mental health.

“Conflict has a profound and long-lasting impact on all children. All sides should do everything possible to prevent further violence. Another conflict will only bring more suffering and more grief. A long-lasting solution to this conflict is required.’

III. UN HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR IN THE OPT GRAVELY CONCERNED BY THE ONGOING ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE IN GAZA AND ISRAEL

On 6 August, the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Lynn Hastings, issued the following [statement](#).

I am gravely concerned by the ongoing and serious escalation of violence in and around Gaza between Palestinian militants and Israel which so far has claimed the lives of 13 Palestinians by Israeli airstrikes, including a 5-year-old child and one woman. Reports indicate that more than 100 Palestinians have been injured and 7 Israelis injured. Residential areas in both Gaza and Israel have been hit and houses damaged; 31 families in Gaza have already been left homeless.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza is already dire and can only worsen with this most recent escalation. The hostilities must stop to avoid more deaths and injuries of civilians in Gaza and Israel. The principles of international humanitarian law including those of distinction, precaution and proportionality must be respected by all parties.

Fuel for the Gaza Power Plant is due to run out today; electricity has already been cut. The continued operation of basic service facilities such as hospitals, schools, warehouses, and designated shelters for internally displaced persons is essential and now at risk. Movement and access of humanitarian personnel, for critical medical cases, and for essential goods, including food and fuel into Gaza, must not be impeded so that humanitarian needs can be met.

The Israeli authorities and Palestinian armed groups must immediately allow the United Nations and our humanitarian partners to bring in fuel, food, and medical supplies and to deploy humanitarian personnel in accordance with international principles; this includes specifically ensuring access and safety through key border crossings. We stand ready to work with all sides to ensure humanitarian needs are met.

I reiterate the United Nations Special Coordinator's appeal on all sides for an immediate de-escalation and halt to the violence, to avoid destructive ramifications, particularly for civilians.

IV. UN SPECIAL COORDINATOR WORKS WITH PARTIES TO DE-ESCALATE THE SITUATION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND GAZA

On 7 August, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland issued the following [statement](#).

The United Nations has been intensively engaged and closely working with Egypt on mediating a restoration of calm.

We underscore our commitment to do all we can towards ending the ongoing escalation, ensuring the safety and security of the civilian population, and following-up on the Palestinian prisoners' file.

I will continue to work with all relevant parties to de-escalate the situation urgently.

V. SECRETARY-GENERAL WELCOMES CEASEFIRE IN GAZA AND ISRAEL

On 7 August, the Spokesperson for Secretary-General Antonio Guterres issued the following [statement](#).

The Secretary-General welcomes the announcement of a ceasefire in Gaza and Israel. He is deeply saddened by the loss of life and injuries, including children, from airstrikes in Gaza and the indiscriminate firing of rockets toward Israel from population centres in Gaza by Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other militant groups. He extends his deepest condolences to the victims of the violence and their loved ones.

The hostilities have contributed to a humanitarian emergency. Crossings into Gaza have been closed and power shortages are affecting essential facilities and supplies. Hundreds of buildings and homes have been destroyed or damaged, leaving thousands of Palestinians homeless.

The Secretary-General commends Egypt for its efforts carried out, in close coordination with the United Nations, to help restore calm. The Secretary-General calls on all sides to observe the ceasefire.

He reaffirms the United Nations' commitment to the achievement of the two-State solution based on relevant United Nations resolutions, international law, and prior agreements and the importance of restoring a political horizon. Only a negotiated sustainable political solution will end, once and for all, these devastating cycles of violence and lead to a peaceful future for Palestinians and Israelis alike.

VI. UNRWA IS DEEPLY CONCERNED BY THE EVENTS IN GAZA

On 7 August, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees Spokesperson Tamara Alrifai issued the following [statement](#).

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is deeply concerned by the events in Gaza over the last two days. Yesterday, five Palestine refugees were killed in Jabalia camp including two children who attended UNRWA schools.

The Agency expresses its deepest condolences to the families of those affected by the most recent escalation of hostilities.

UNRWA essential personnel are working around the clock to monitor the situation and ensure critical service delivery. Reduced electricity and fuel shortages are cause for grave concern, particularly for the continued operation of hospitals and medical facilities and water desalination. People in Gaza have received an average of four hours of electricity per day in the past two days.

The profound psychosocial impact of recurrent conflicts on the residents of Gaza, especially children, is palpable.

UNRWA unequivocally condemns the killing and wounding of all civilians, who are protected from attack under international law, and the conduct of military operations in the vicinity of

civilians and civilian locations. UNRWA calls on all parties to ensure the protection of civilians, including Palestine refugees.

VII. BUREAU OF THE PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE WELCOMES CEASEFIRE IN GAZA AND CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION OF TWO-STATE SOLUTION

On 8 August, the Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People issued the following [statement](#).

The Bureau of the United Nations General Assembly Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People is following with grave concern the latest developments in Gaza. The Bureau condemns the serious escalation of violence between Israel and Palestinian Islamic Jihad militants started on 5 August, following Israeli air strikes and artillery attacks on densely populated areas, which has so far reportedly claimed the lives of 46 Palestinians, including 4 women and 15 children, and resulted in hundreds of homes destroyed, thousands rendered homeless and a humanitarian emergency.

The Bureau welcomes the Secretary-General's call on all sides to observe the ceasefire and commends Egypt for its mediation role in deescalating the situation, while calling on all sides to exercise maximum restraint to protect civilians and prevent further casualties. The Bureau calls on Israel, the occupying Power, to end practices of collective punishment against Palestinians in Gaza and ensure accountability for persistent rights violations of international human rights and humanitarian law committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including during military operations.

The Bureau further appeals for the immediate lifting of the siege against Gaza, now in its fifteenth year, as well as for the start of negotiations leading to an end to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory and the implementation of two-State solution based on relevant United Nations resolutions and international law.

VIII. SECURITY COUNCIL HOLDS URGENT MEETING ON ISRAEL-GAZA ESCALATION

On 8 August, the Security Council President, at the request of the United Arab Emirates, China, France, Ireland and Norway, convened an urgent meeting of the Council. The text of the briefing given by Special Coordinator Tor Wennesland appears below ([S/PV.9107](#)).

The past few days witnessed a deeply worrisome escalation in the Gaza Strip between Israeli military forces and Palestinian armed groups, primarily the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). Preliminary numbers, which have yet to be confirmed, indicate that, from 5 August, the Israel Defense Forces launched 147 airstrikes against targets in Gaza. Palestinian militants launched approximately 1,100 rockets and mortars into Israel, many of which landed deep inside Israeli territory. During the escalation, 46 Palestinians were killed and 360 were injured, and hundreds of residential housing units were damaged or destroyed, along with other civilian infrastructure. Seventy Israelis were injured, with damage to residential and other civilian structures.

Last night, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Israeli Prime Minister's Office announced, in separate statements, that a ceasefire had been agreed and would come into effect at 11.30 p.m. on 7 August. The ceasefire remains in place as I speak. I welcome this agreement and I am grateful to Egypt for its crucial role in securing the ceasefire, alongside the United Nations, and I appreciate the very important support provided by Qatar, the United States of America, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority and others to de-escalate the situation. Together, those combined efforts helped prevent the outbreak of a full-scale war and, as of this morning, allowed for the delivery of much-needed humanitarian relief to the people of Gaza. The United Nations remains in close contact with all parties to solidify the ceasefire and ensure that the significant progress made towards easing restrictions, which we have seen since the end of the escalation last May, can be safeguarded and ultimately expanded.

This most recent escalation had its roots in deeper tensions, which have been rising for months across the occupied Palestinian territory. Tensions spiked across the West Bank in March and April, particularly after five terrorist attacks — the deadliest in years — took place inside Israel. Following those attacks, Israeli authorities increased military operations inside the occupied West Bank, with a significant number of the operations taking place in Jenin, focused on Palestinian militant groups operating in the area.

On 1 August, Israeli security forces arrested Bassem Al-Saadi, a senior leader of Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the occupied West Bank, along with his son-in-law. A 17-year-old Palestinian, whom PIJ claimed as an affiliate, was killed during the operation. PIJ immediately declared a “state of alert” and raised the level of readiness of its militants. In response to the threats, Israel closed the crossings between Israel and the Gaza Strip on 2 August and implemented measures restricting civilian movements in the so-called “Gaza envelope”. Tensions mounted amid highly inflammatory rhetoric by Palestinian militant groups. The United Nations, Egypt and others began intensive mediation efforts to avert an escalation.

On 5 August, Israeli forces carried out a series of air strikes against reported military targets, including against a senior PIJ commander in Gaza, who was killed in the attack. Hours later, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other militant factions launched more than 100 indiscriminate rockets and other projectiles from within civilian neighbourhoods inside the Gaza Strip towards civilian population centres in Israel, including Tel Aviv, central Israel and the Gaza envelope. Over the following days, Israeli air and artillery strikes against militant targets in Gaza and rocket launches by Palestinian militants into Israel continued intensively.

The escalation took a severe toll on the civilian population. I repeat that the figures we are presenting are initial and verification is ongoing.

From 5 through 7 August, 46 Palestinians were killed, including 20 civilians — 15 children and 4 women. According to Israeli official sources, the strikes killed 21 operatives, mainly affiliated with PIJ. The Ministry of Health in Gaza reported 360 Palestinians injured, including at least 151 children and 58 women. At least 10 houses were completely destroyed and 48 severely damaged and rendered uninhabitable. According to the Gaza authorities, over 600 housing units were damaged, displacing 84 families.

Approximately 1,100 rockets and mortars were fired by Palestinian armed groups, mainly PIJ's Al-Quds Brigades. Some 20 per cent of those reportedly fell short within the Gaza Strip, causing

damage and, in at least three cases, potentially large numbers of civilian casualties. United Nations monitoring of the incidents is ongoing. Of those that crossed the border, most were intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome, but some caused material damage. Israeli sources reported 70 injuries, including nine children.

I condemn the indiscriminate launching of rockets from highly populated residential neighbourhoods in Gaza into civilian population centres in Israel, which puts at risk both Palestinian and Israeli civilians and violates international humanitarian law. While fully recognizing Israel's legitimate security concerns, I reiterate that, under international law, all use of force must be proportionate and take all feasible steps to avoid civilian casualties. Children, in particular, must never be the target of violence or be put in harm's way.

Against the backdrop of the Gaza escalation, tensions remained high in the occupied West Bank. From the onset of the escalation, Palestinians held demonstrations in multiple locations, protesting the Israeli strikes on Gaza. The President of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, issued a statement condemning the Israeli strikes and reiterating his call for the international community to protect Palestinians.

In addition to loss of life, injuries and destruction of property, the complete closure of the Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings for six days had severe humanitarian consequences for Palestinians in the Strip. Gaza was on the brink of a humanitarian collapse last evening when the ceasefire came into effect. As in all escalations, there are dire humanitarian consequences and a total breakdown of all normal supply lines and essential services. Basic food, medical supplies and fuel were unable to enter. As a result, on 6 August, Gaza's only power plant shut down, causing rolling power cuts of over 20 hours per day and severely impacting the delivery of basic essential services and facilities, such as hospitals and clinics, schools, water desalination and distribution, as well as wastewater treatment. Gaza's chronic shortages of essential medicines and equipment were exacerbated by the escalation, and the closure of Erez prevented the daily crossing of some 50 patients requiring specialized treatment in Israel. The closures also worsened the already precarious food security situation in the Gaza Strip, reducing stocks of basic foods, particularly wheat flour.

The ceasefire announced last night has allowed the resumption of essential movements of goods and people in and out of Gaza, including the delivery of humanitarian assistance and fuel for the Gaza Power Plant. I welcome Israeli authorities' timely reopening of the Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings after the ceasefire went into effect. The opening of Kerem Shalom has allowed a total of 23 trucks of fuel to enter the Gaza Strip today, enabling the Gaza Power Plant to resume normal operations from 8 p.m. this evening, local time.

Ms. Lynn Hastings, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and United Nations Resident Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, entered Gaza this morning and is leading the United Nations and humanitarian response on the ground. She has spent the day meeting with United Nations and humanitarian agencies, families affected by the escalation and civil society groups, and assessing the damage and needs. The cost will be steep.

The escalation of recent days came a little more than one year after the end of the May 2021 escalation in Gaza. The devastating impact of that conflict is still with us today. In the months following the hostilities in May 2021, gradual but significant progress was made in opening Gaza

for the movement of people and goods. Those steps helped ease living conditions in the Strip. It is imperative that we see a resumption of the measures that were in place and continue our efforts to expand them further. We are committed to supporting the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement, ensuring the safety and security of the civilian population and following-up on the Palestinian prisoners file.

Yesterday the Secretary-General welcomed the ceasefire announcement and called on all sides to abide by the agreement. I echo the Secretary-General's call. I want to make the Council aware of the following: the ceasefire is fragile. Any resumption of hostilities will only have devastating consequences for Palestinians and Israelis and make any political progress on key issues elusive.

Ultimately, the underlying drivers of this and previous escalations remain. These cycles of violence will cease only when we achieve a political resolution of the conflict that brings an end to the occupation and the realization of a two-State solution on the basis of the 1967 lines, in line with United Nations resolutions, international law and previous agreements.

I reiterate my call to the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships, along with the international community, to strengthen diplomatic efforts to return to meaningful negotiations towards a viable two-State solution.

IX. UNICEF WELCOMES CEASEFIRE IN THE GAZA STRIP AND ISRAEL AFTER THREE DAYS OF VIOLENCE TAKE HEAVY TOLL ON CHILDREN

On 8 August, UNICEF Regional Director Adele Khodr issued the following [statement](#).

UNICEF welcomes the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and Israel after three days of heavy violence.

Fifteen children were killed and 150 reportedly injured in the Gaza strip, as well as 14 children reportedly injured in Israel. When violence rages, it is children who pay the price. Beyond these figures, there are young lives. Many of them were cut short.

The impact of such escalations is huge, and continues even after a ceasefire is in place, affecting children's ability to realize their rights and continuing to expose children and families to risks.

For many children, this was the fifth conflict they have lived through in the past 15 years. Many children are already living with the long-term psychological impact of continued exposure to violence.

Due to the lack of fuel, electricity supply in the Gaza Strip has been reduced to only four hours per day, affecting essential, life-saving services. This includes water supply from wells and desalination plants, raising concerns over the availability of safe and clean water. We welcome this morning's shipment of fuel and call for more of these crucial humanitarian deliveries to the Gaza Strip.

UNICEF is on the ground delivering, with partners, emergency health supplies, enough to reach more than 50,000 affected people. We are providing mental health and psychosocial support

and working to refer children and families to available protection services where required. UNICEF is working with partners for all children to go back to school safely at the end of August.

UNICEF once again calls on all parties to reach a long-term political and peaceful solution to the decades-long conflict, for the sake of all children and their future.

X. OIC CONDEMNS ISRAEL'S NABLUS RAID

On 9 August, the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) General Secretariat issued the following [statement](#).

The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) condemned the continued crimes of the Israeli occupation in the Palestinian land, and its assassination today, August 9, 2022, of three Palestinian citizens and wounding of seventy others, in addition to the destruction of a number of homes and properties while storming the city of Nablus.

The OIC held the Israeli occupation authorities fully responsible for this heinous crime, which embodies the policy of continued Israeli oppression, aggression and terrorism against the Palestinian people.

Furthermore, it called anew the international community to intervene urgently in order to put an end to these attacks and crimes, hold the perpetrators accountable, and ensure international protection for the Palestinian people and their sanctities.

XI. UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ALARMED BY NUMBER OF PALESTINIAN CHILDREN KILLED IN LATEST ESCALATION, URGES ACCOUNTABILITY

On 11 August, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet issued the following [statement](#).

UN Human Rights Chief Michelle Bachelet today expressed alarm at the high number of Palestinians, including children, killed and injured in the occupied Palestinian territory this year, including in intense hostilities between Israel and Palestinian armed groups in Gaza last weekend.

In the past week, 19 Palestinian children have been killed in the occupied Palestinian territory, taking the death toll since the start of the year to 37. Seventeen children were killed during the Gaza hostilities from 5-7 August, and two more were killed on 9 August in Israeli law enforcement operations in the West Bank.

“Inflicting hurt on any child during the course of conflict is deeply disturbing, and the killing and maiming of so many children this year is unconscionable,” said Bachelet.

The civilian cost of the latest escalation in Gaza from 5-7 August was heavy. The UN Human Rights Office has verified that among the 48 Palestinians killed, there were at least 22 civilians, including 17 children and four women. The status of 22 fatalities remains undetermined. Of the

360 Palestinians reported injured, nearly two-thirds were civilians, including 151 children, 58 women and 19 older people. In a number of incidents, children were the majority of casualties.

A number of Israeli strikes hit *prima facie* civilian objects, causing civilian casualties and damage to civilian objects.

“International humanitarian law is clear. Launching an attack which may be expected to incidentally kill or injure civilians, or damage civilian objects, in disproportionate manner to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated, is prohibited. Such attacks must stop,” said Bachelet.

In violation of international humanitarian law, Palestinian armed groups also launched hundreds of rockets and mortars in indiscriminate attacks, causing civilian casualties and damage to civilian objects in Israel as well as in Gaza. According to the Israeli authorities, a total of 70 Israelis were injured.

While the ceasefire for the latest escalation in Gaza is holding, tensions remain very high in the West Bank, where four Palestinians were killed and 90 others were injured by live ammunition fired by Israeli forces on 9 August. Among those killed was a 16-year-old boy, shot by Israeli soldiers during an arrest raid in Nablus which also left 76 injured. Another 16-year-old boy was shot and killed by Israeli soldiers after some Palestinians threw stones and fireworks at them at a checkpoint in Hebron.

Bachelet said the widespread use of live ammunition by Israeli forces in law enforcement operations across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in 2022 has led to an alarming increase in Palestinian fatalities. The UN Human Rights Office in the occupied Palestinian territory has this year documented the killing of 74 Palestinians, including 20 children. In many incidents Israeli forces used lethal force in a manner that appeared to be in violation of international human rights law, she added.

The High Commissioner called for prompt, independent, impartial, thorough and transparent investigations into all incidents where any person was killed or injured.

“An almost total lack of accountability persists in the occupied Palestinian territory – whether for violations of international humanitarian law by all parties in hostilities in Gaza, or for recurring Israeli violations of international human rights law and the law of occupation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, including incidents of unnecessary and disproportionate use of force,” Bachelet said.

“This climate of impunity, along with the long-standing violations, drives the cycle of violence and the recurrence of violations.

“The situation in Palestine is extremely fragile, and events such as in Nablus risk igniting further hostilities in Gaza. The utmost restraint is necessary to prevent further bloodshed, including by ensuring that firearms are used strictly in compliance with international standards,” the High Commissioner said.

XII. UNRWA CONDEMNS THE KILLING AND WOUNDING OF CIVILIANS

On 11 August, UNRWA published the following news [article](#).

Palestine refugees, like all residents in Gaza, once again suffered the consequences of another round of escalation, the worst since May 2021. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) has confirmed that 48 Palestinians were killed, including 17 children. Further, the Ministry of Health in Gaza reports that more than 360 others were injured, including 151 children and 58 women. In addition to the devastating loss of life, OCHA reports that some 1,761 housing units sustained damages, with some 8,500 people being impacted by the damages. Some 450 Palestinians were internally displaced, some of whom took shelter in UNRWA schools.

During the emergency, UNRWA staff members in Gaza worked around the clock to ensure continued service delivery to more than 1.4 million Palestine refugees that reside in the besieged Strip. All 22 UNRWA health centres remained open and fully operational throughout the escalation to provide care. Additionally, UNRWA sanitation staff continued their support by clearing rubbish. In total, nearly 3,500 UNRWA staff continued to work in difficult and dangerous conditions during the last escalation.

UNRWA unequivocally condemns the killing and wounding of all civilians, who are protected from attack under international law. The Agency expresses its deepest condolences to the families of those affected by the most recent escalation of hostilities.

XIII. EU AND MEMBER STATES' REPRESENTATIVES VISIT GAZA AND SIGN € 97 MILLION CONTRIBUTION TO UNRWA

On 16 August, UNRWA issued the following [press release](#).

In the aftermath of the latest escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip, the European Union (EU) Representative to West Bank and Gaza, Mr. Sven Kühn von Burgsdorff, and other EU Member States' representatives visited today UNRWA Beach Preparatory School in Beach Palestine refugee camp. This visit coincided with the signing of the annual EU contribution to UNRWA Programme Budget for 2022, confirming EU and Member States' steadfast commitment to the rights and human development of Palestine refugees living in Gaza, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, until a just and lasting solution to their plight.

"I am extremely grateful as the European Union continues to be one of the most reliable donors and a strategic partner for the Agency in 2022. This timely contribution comes as the Agency faces important and deepening financial challenges to implement the mandate received from the UN General Assembly. EU funds will help us sustain essential services, including education, health care and social services to Palestine refugees, who are confronted with immense hardship across the whole region," said UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini.

The delegation visiting Gaza was received by the Director of UNRWA Affairs in Gaza, Thomas White, and the UNRWA teams. During the recent escalation, 48 Palestinians were killed, including 17 children and some 450 Palestinians were internally displaced, some of whom took

shelter in UNRWA schools. During the emergency, UNRWA staff members in Gaza worked around the clock to ensure continued service delivery to more than 1.4 million Palestine refugees that reside in the besieged Strip.

“The people in Gaza continue to suffer immensely from the hardship caused by 15 years of closure and economic restrictions. This is exacerbated by repeated rounds of violent attacks where so many innocent Palestinians have lost their lives and suffered from injuries. I come here today, together with representatives of EU Member States, to show our solidarity with the victims of the last round of military conflict and to extend concrete support to Palestine refugees, and notably youth and children, through our longstanding partnership with UNRWA. While we encourage all parties to fully uphold the ceasefire, we call for a transparent and independent investigation into the unlawful killing of civilians, including many children and women. Without a fundamental change to the political, security and economic situation in Gaza, including the end of the closure and achieving reconciliation among Palestinian factions, Gazan civilians will be the one paying the price for the lack of political will on the side of Israel as the occupying power and the Palestinian duty bearers to achieve a peaceful solution that allows the creation of a sovereign, viable and democratic Palestinian State of which Gaza is an integral part,” said the European Union Representative Sven Kühn von Burgsdorff.

Under this newly signed agreement, the EU will provide a contribution of EUR 97 million to support the human development work of UNRWA in 2022, including over half a million girls and boys attending UNRWA schools and around two million refugees seeking health care at UNRWA clinics. This contribution also includes a EUR 15 million top-up from the Food and Resilience Facility to mitigate the impact of the Ukraine crisis on food prices and food security for the most vulnerable refugee populations.

For more than 50 years, the EU has established itself as a key strategic partner for the Agency, supporting UNRWA in its efforts to help Palestine refugees achieve their full potential despite their difficult circumstances. The partnership between the EU and UNRWA has evolved over time, with the EU and its Member States becoming the largest multilateral provider of international assistance to Palestine refugees. Last year, the EU signed a [Joint Declaration](#) in support of UNRWA for the period 2021-2024.

As an Agency, UNRWA is continually looking to adapt and evolve to match the protracted and unresolved crisis, stretching resources to service the greatest need each year. Since 2015, UNRWA has reduced operational costs by US\$ 600 million, whilst maintaining delivery of high quality health and education services for Palestine refugees.

XIV. UN AGENCIES¹ AND THE ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES² WORKING IN THE OPT URGE ISRAEL TO ALLOW HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATIONS TO CONTINUE THEIR WORK

On 18 August, the UN Agencies and the Association of International Development Agencies working in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (AIDA) issued the following [statement](#).

This morning, Israeli Forces broke into, searched and sealed the offices of seven Palestinian human rights and humanitarian organizations³ in Ramallah in Area A of the occupied West Bank. Their property was confiscated and destroyed and military orders closing the offices were left at the premises.

The United Nations and its partners take seriously allegations of funding terrorism and the Israeli designations of these organizations as “terror organizations” and/or “unlawful”. Despite offers to review the allegations to determine if funds have been diverted, Israeli authorities have not given any compelling evidence to the United Nations Agencies nor its NGO partners working in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to support these designations. Several Member States recently announced that the evidence which was shared with them does not justify the designations.

The attempted closures of these organization offices represent the latest in a series of actions by Israel that are further limiting the ability of human rights, humanitarian and development work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which affect all institutions working to promote human rights, development and delivering assistance.

We reiterate our November 2021 statement: counter-terrorism legislation must be in accordance with obligations under international law, in particular, international humanitarian law and human rights law, which include full respect for the rights to freedom of association and expression. It cannot be applied to legitimate human rights and humanitarian work; the breadth of the Israeli 2016 Anti-Terrorism legislation and its impact on the presumption of innocence present serious concerns under international law.

We urge the Government of Israel to refrain from any action that would prevent these organizations from continuing their critical human rights, humanitarian and development work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

¹ Representing United Nations development and humanitarian entities, agencies, funds and programmes

² AIDA represents 83 International NGOs working in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

³ The organizations affected are: Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association; Al Haq; Bisan Center for Research and Development; Defense for Children International – Palestine; Health Work Committees (HWC); Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC); and the Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees (UPWC)

XV. UN HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERTS CONDEMN ISRAELI SUPPRESSION OF PALESTINIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS

On 24 August, Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967; Mary Lawlor, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Fionnuala Ni Aoláin, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism; Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Melissa Upreti, Dorothy Estrada Tanck, Elizabeth Broderick, Ivana Radačić, and Meskerem Geset Techane, Working Group on discrimination against women and girls; Reem Alsalem, Special Rapporteur on violence against women; Clément Nyaletsossi Voule, Special Rapporteur on the right to peaceful assembly and association; Tendayi Achiume, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism; Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, Special Rapporteur on the rights to water and sanitation; Tlaleng Mofokeng, Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; Siobhán Mullally, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons; Livingstone Sewanyana, Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order; SORCHA MacLeod, Jelena Aparac, Ravindran Daniel, Chris Kwaja, and Carlos Salazar, Working Group on the use of mercenaries; Alexandra Xanthaki, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; Olivier De Schutter, Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights; Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing; and Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food. issued the following [statement](#).

UN experts today condemned Israel's escalating attacks against Palestinian civil society in the occupied West Bank, after the Israeli army broke into the offices of seven Palestinian human rights and humanitarian groups operating in Ramallah and shut them down last week.

"These actions amount to severe suppression of human rights defenders and are illegal and unacceptable," the experts said, encouraging UN member states to take effective measures afforded by international law to put an end to these abuses.

In a dawn raid on 18 August, Israeli forces caused extensive damage to property and issued military orders imposing the closure of the seven Palestinian human rights groups' offices**. These actions follow Israel's earlier designations and declarations of these organisations as "terrorist" and "unlawful".

"These designations and declarations are illegitimate and unjustifiable and no concrete and credible evidence substantiating Israel's allegations has ever been provided," said the experts, who made the same [observations](#) in April 2022.

On 18 and 21 August, the Israeli security service Shin Bet interrogated the directors of three of the seven organisations, Union of Palestinian Women's Committees, Al-Haq and Defence for Children-Palestine. The experts noted with particular concern the alleged threats made by Shin Bet against them, including as reported in a [public statement](#) regarding Al-Haq's director Shawan Jabarin.

“The Israeli government has taken multiple measures to undermine civil society organisations, restricting and repressing the legitimate activities of human rights defenders, which also has a disproportionate impact on women human rights defenders,” the experts said.

“The result is serious infringements of the rights to freedom of association, opinion and expression and the right to participate in public and cultural affairs, which Israel is fully obliged to fulfill, respect and protect,” the experts said. “Civil society is what is left to the Palestinians for their minimum protection. Shrinking this vital space and resource is illegal and immoral.”

The UN experts said information presented by Israel to justify its decision to blacklist human rights groups as terror organisations had failed to convince donor governments and international organisations. The experts noted that a review of Al Haq by the Anti-Fraud Office of the European Union (EU) confirmed that “no suspicions of irregularities and/or fraud affecting EU funds” had been found.

The experts called on the EU, all five permanent members of the Security Council, and all member states to take concrete measures to protect the Palestinian organizations and staff whose offices were raided and closed.

“Such protection depends on Israel revoking once and for all its designations and declarations of these organisations as “terrorist” and “unlawful”, the experts said. “The EU and its member states in particular must urgently use their leverage to stop these aggressive attacks on civil society, in line with their commitments and obligations to protect human rights defenders and civic space.”

“Once again, it is clear that statements condemning and regretting Israel’s unlawful measures are not sufficient – it is time that words are followed by swift and determined action by the international community to put diplomatic pressure on Israel to restore the rule of law, justice and human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory,” the experts said.

XVI. UN SPECIAL COORDINATOR, UNRWA COMMISSIONER-GENERAL, PRESIDENT OF THE US/MIDDLE EAST PROJECT BRIEF SECURITY COUNCIL

On 25 August, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland, Philippe Lazzarini, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; and Daniel Levy, President of the U.S./Middle East Project, briefed the Security Council ([S/PV.9116](#)). The briefings appear below.

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Mr. Wennesland: My previous briefing (see [S/PV.9107](#)) took place just after Israel and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) each independently declared a ceasefire, following three days of military escalation. I am pleased to update the Security Council that the ceasefire remains in effect and a fragile calm has been restored in Gaza. The Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings have remained open since 8 August, allowing for the entry of essential goods and materials. The United Nations is working with partners to ensure the delivery of urgent assistance to those who need it most.

The ceasefire prevented the situation from escalating into a full-scale war, which would have had devastating consequences. It also allowed for the resumption of the measures implemented over the past year that have resulted in much-needed economic relief to the people in Gaza. But a ceasefire is limited to ending immediate hostilities; the underlying drivers of the conflict are still unresolved.

Violence has increased across much of the occupied West Bank. Israeli settlement activity continues, along with demolitions and evictions. Fiscal and political challenges threaten the Palestinian Authority's effectiveness in delivering essential public services. The West Bank and Gaza remain politically divided. Palestinians in Gaza face the challenge of economic and movement restrictions linked with the Israeli closure regime, the nature of Hamas rule and the ever-present threat of violence. Unless those fundamental issues are addressed, the cycle of acute crisis followed by short-term fixes will persist. Concerted efforts are needed to restore a political horizon and resume meaningful negotiations.

My briefing on 8 August provided an initial account of the three-day escalation. Overall, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) conducted 147 airstrikes against what they said were militant targets in Gaza. Palestinian militants indiscriminately fired approximately 1,100 rockets from densely populated areas in the Strip towards Israel. Of those, Israeli officials reported that around 35 per cent were intercepted by the Iron Dome and 18 per cent fell short and landed within the Gaza Strip, causing damage and, reportedly, civilian casualties.

The violence took a severe toll on civilians. According to the most recent figures, 49 Palestinians were killed, of whom at least 26 were civilians, including four women and 17 children. According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, 360 Palestinians were injured during the escalation. Israeli officials reported 70 Israelis injured, including nine children. In Gaza, 10 houses were completely destroyed, while another 48 were severely damaged. A reported 650 housing units were damaged.

On 5 August, Israeli forces carried out a series of air strikes, killing a senior PIJ leader and other suspected militants. In the initial strikes, a 5-year-old girl was killed in eastern Gaza City, along with two men, and a 22-year-old woman was killed east of Khan Younis.

On 6 August, a 60-year-old woman was killed and five were children injured in an Israeli strike. One of the children, a 10-year-old girl, died in hospital on 8 August. On the same day, seven other Palestinians were killed in an Israeli strike in Rafah, including a 13-year-old child, two women and a senior PIJ commander. Thirty others were reportedly injured, including at least seven children and five women.

On 7 August, five children were killed and four others were injured in an explosion in Al-Falouja cemetery, east of Al-Jabalia. On 16 August, citing Israeli official sources, media reported that the IDF had concluded that the casualties were caused by an Israeli air strike. The IDF has not publicly confirmed the finding.

On two separate occasions, Palestinian civilians were killed or injured in explosions, the causes of which have yet to be verified. On 6 August, seven Palestinians — all civilians, including at least four children — were killed in an explosion near the Emad Aql Mosque in Al-Jabalia. Forty-three others, including 26 children, were injured. On 7 August, an explosion in Al-Bureij killed three

children and their 49-yearold father, whom the Al-Qassam Brigades claimed as an operative. Israeli forces denied involvement in the incidents, which they said were caused by rocket launches from militant groups. Palestinian armed groups have made no public statements on those incidents.

I am concerned that air strikes in densely populated areas resulted in civilian fatalities and injuries. Israel must abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law, including the proportional use of force and the taking of all feasible precautions to spare civilians and civilian objects in the conduct of military operations.

I condemn the indiscriminate launching of rockets by Palestinian armed groups from highly populated neighbourhoods in Gaza into civilian population centres in Israel, in violation of international humanitarian law.

I reiterate that children must never be the target of violence or put in harm's way.

Daily violence also continued at high levels across the occupied West Bank. During the reporting period, a total of 12 Palestinians, including four children, were killed by Israeli security forces during demonstrations, clashes, search-and-arrest operations, attacks and alleged attacks against Israelis and other incidents, and 289 Palestinians, including three women and 83 children, were injured. Israeli settlers and other civilians perpetrated 39 attacks against Palestinians, resulting in eight injuries and/or damage to Palestinian property.

In all, 28 Israelis and other civilians, including at least four women and two children and four Israeli security personnel, were injured by Palestinians in clashes, shootings, stabbings and ramming attacks or as a result of the throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails, among other incidents. In total, Palestinians perpetrated 75 attacks against Israeli civilians, of which 57 were stone-throwing incidents, resulting in injuries and/or damage to Israeli property.

On 22 July, Nasser Al-Shaer, a Hamas-affiliated former official, was shot multiple times and injured by two unknown assailants in Kafr Qalil village, near Nablus. The Palestinian Authority ordered an investigation, and on 26 July, Palestinian security forces announced that they had arrested two Palestinian suspects.

On 24 July, Israeli security forces shot and killed two Palestinians and injured six others in an exchange of fire during an arrest operation in Nablus.

On 26 July, Israeli forces shot an unarmed 59-yearold man with a mental disability at the Huwwara checkpoint, south of Nablus. The man died of his injuries on 29 July.

On 9 August, Israeli security forces shot and killed a 16-year-old Palestinian and injured five others during a clash in Hebron. Israeli officials said that the Palestinian had thrown stones towards Israeli forces, who responded with live fire.

On the same day, four Palestinians, including a 16-year-old, were killed, and 76 Palestinians were injured with live ammunition during clashes that erupted following an Israeli security forces military operation in Nablus. Another 16-year-old Palestinian subsequently died from his injuries.

On 14 August, a Palestinian opened fire at a group of Jewish worshippers in Jerusalem's Old City. Eight civilians, including a pregnant woman, were injured, two seriously. The assailant fled the scene, but later turned himself over to the police.

On 15 August, Israeli security forces shot and killed a Palestinian during a search operation and subsequent clashes in Kufr Aqab, north of Jerusalem. Israeli police stated that the man was shot while attempting to stab officers. The man's father, who was present during the operation, denied that.

On 17 August, Israeli security forces shot and killed a Palestinian and injured five others during clashes in Nablus, which took place in the context of Palestinians throwing stones and reportedly firing towards buses transporting Israeli civilians to Joseph's Tomb for religious worship in accordance with established procedures.

On 19 August, an unarmed 58-year-old Palestinian man was shot and killed. A video appeared to show the man to be a bystander returning from dawn prayers when an exchange of fire broke out. There are conflicting accounts as to the source of the shot. Israeli authorities stated that they are investigating the incident.

Settler-related violence also continued during the reporting period. On 29 July, a 15-year-old Palestinian was shot during a confrontation between Palestinians and armed Israeli settlers accompanied by Israeli security forces outside Al-Mughhayyir village, near Ramallah. The boy subsequently died. According to witnesses, he had thrown stones and was shot in the back while running away. It remains unclear whether Israeli settlers or security forces fired the shot. Two other Palestinians were injured with live ammunition.

In three separate incidents, Israeli civilians used batons and metal bars and threw stones to attack Palestinian farmers working on their lands, injuring five Palestinians, including an elderly man.

I reiterate that the perpetrators of all acts of violence must be held accountable and brought to justice. Security forces must use lethal force only when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life.

Turning to settlement-related developments, on 25 July, the Jerusalem District Planning Committee advanced plans for the construction of 1,215 housing units at the Lower Aqueduct site, adjacent to Kibbutz Ramot Rachel and the Palestinian neighbourhood of Umm Tuba. Some of the units are intended for construction across the Green Line in occupied East Jerusalem.

On 27 July, Israel's Supreme Court reversed its previous ruling, which ordered the evacuation of settlers from the illegal outpost of Mizpe Kramim, near Ramallah. The Court accepted the Government's argument that the Palestinian land in the area had been allocated to the settlers in good faith and that the principle of market regulation should be applied. Rights groups expressed concerns that the ruling would pave the way for the retroactive legalization of other outposts under Israeli law.

On 28 July, Israeli settlers, accompanied by Israeli security forces, moved into an empty Palestinian house in the H-2 Area of Hebron city.

I reiterate that all settlements are illegal under international law and remain a substantial obstacle to peace.

During the reporting period, Israeli authorities demolished, seized or forced owners to demolish 78 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C and 18 in East Jerusalem, displacing 103 Palestinians, including 50 children. The demolitions were carried out due to the lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain.

On 25 July, Israeli security forces demolished two homes housing multiple families in Qarawat Bani Hassan village, near Salfit in Area B. Family members of the residents were accused of having killed an Israeli settlement guard in April 2022. The demolition resulted in damage to three additional neighbouring homes and displaced 18 people, including 10 children. Three Palestinians were injured in related clashes with Israeli forces.

On 8 August, Israeli security forces demolished two houses in the village of Rummana, near Jenin, in Area B. The houses belonged to family members of Palestinians indicted for killing three people in Israel in May. Thirteen people, including four children, were displaced. I call on the Israeli authorities to end their demolitions of Palestinian-owned property and the displacement and eviction of Palestinians, and to approve additional plans that would enable Palestinians to build legally and address their development needs. I am concerned about the recent announcement by Israel's Ministry of Education that it had given instructions to halt the granting of permanent licences to six Palestinian schools in occupied East Jerusalem owing to what it described as incitement against Israel in their curriculum. If a solution is not found, more than 2,000 students will be affected.

On 17 August, the Military Commander of the Israel Defense Forces rejected appeals by five non-governmental organizations (NGOs) objecting to their designation in November 2021 as unlawful organizations. The same day, Israel's Defence Minister announced that the designation of three of them as terrorist organizations, made in October 2021 under Israel's counter-terrorism law, had been made permanent. Three other organizations have appealed their designations. On 18 August, Israeli forces ordered the closure of the offices of seven organizations, including all six NGOs that had been designated as terrorist organizations in November 2021, and searched their offices in Ramallah. Equipment was confiscated and in some cases destroyed, and confidential files were seized. The Israeli authorities also summoned the directors of at least three of those organizations for questioning. I echo the Secretary-General's concern about the shrinking space for civil society in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory.

In Gaza, despite the disruptions caused by the escalation, some positive steps were taken during the reporting period. As of 1 August, more than 14,000 economic-needs permits have been issued, including more than 11,000 permits for workers from Gaza to enter Israel and another 3,000 for traders and businesspeople. Israel also extended social entitlements to workers from the Gaza Strip. I would welcome seeing a steady increase in the number of permits issued in future. Since 8 August, when movement was resumed into and out of Gaza, progress has been made on resuming the incremental easing of access restrictions that we have seen over the past year. However, delays in importing essential goods and equipment continue.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains deeply troubling. The escalation, and the closures of Israeli-operated crossings between 2 and 7 August, exacerbated the ongoing hardships and

resulted in new immediate needs. The United Nations has identified approximately \$15 million in additional funding requirements for providing psychological support, shelter, livelihoods and cash assistance, as well as essential medicines and medical assistance. In addition, the humanitarian response across the occupied Palestinian territory continued to face chronic funding gaps. As of mid2022, only 25 per cent of the requirement for the humanitarian response plan had been met. Meanwhile, global price increases for key commodities have strained the resources of humanitarian partners and left vulnerable families at risk of food insecurity. The World Food Programme is in immediate need of \$26.5 million to support vulnerable households in Gaza and the West Bank. If the funding is not received, the support to those families will stop in October. On 1 August, in a welcome step towards facilitating imports to the occupied West Bank via Jordan, the use of 40-foot containers was permitted for the first time for shipping goods via the Allenby Bridge. I am hopeful that it will pave the way for addressing other significant obstacles to Palestinian trade.

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The measures taken by Israel to ease the conditions in Gaza since the May 2021 escalation have improved the lives and livelihoods of many Palestinians, and I am encouraged to see them being restored following the most recent escalation. The United Nations will continue engaging with the parties to expand on the progress made over the past year, with the aim of solidifying the ceasefire and enabling further economic development. But as the events of the past weeks have shown us once again, managing the conflict is no substitute for real political progress. We must again turn our attention to the broader strategy of ending the occupation and realizing a two-State solution in line with the relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and previous agreements. That strategy will require significant steps from all sides. It must include the strengthening of the Palestinian Authority and its ability to engage with Israel on the political, economic and security fronts, as well as efforts to achieve the return of the legitimate Palestinian Government to Gaza.

It is crucial that we work to restore a political horizon. As a first step, the tensions and violence across the occupied Palestinian territory should be stopped or significantly reduced, especially in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Unilateral steps that perpetuate negative trends must stop. The space for Palestinian economic activity and further improvements to access and movement in Gaza and the West Bank should be expanded. At the same time, the Palestinian Authority, including its institutional capacity, should be strengthened. Considering the things that I regularly have to report to the Council about, the status quo is neither a strategy nor a strategic option — neither for positive change on the ground nor for a restart of talks between the two sides. I urge the Israeli and Palestinian leadership, as well as the countries of the region and the broader international community, to take firm action to enable a return to meaningful negotiations.

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Mr. Lazzarini: Let me first express my sincere appreciation to the presidency for giving me the opportunity to address the Security Council today. Since my previous briefing to the Council in May 2021 (see [S/PV.8782](#)), the situation of Palestinian refugees has further deteriorated. More than 80 per cent of Palestine refugees in Lebanon, Syria and Gaza live below the poverty line.

In Gaza, the escalation of violence earlier this month was a stark reminder that war and violence can erupt anytime in the absence of a genuine and comprehensive effort to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Some 60 Palestine refugee families lost their homes, and 17 children were killed, 8 of whom were students in schools operated by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Nearly half of UNRWA students suffer from trauma and need special assistance to cope with the repeated cycles of violence and the economic hardship in which their families live.

In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, political, economic and security conditions are deteriorating as Palestine refugees experience high levels of dispossession, violence and insecurity.

In Syria, after 11 years of conflict, the most destitute families are returning to live amid the rubble of their destroyed homes as they can no longer afford rent. Children who returned to demolished camps, such as Yarmouk or Ein Al-Tal, walk near unexploded ordnance to take UNRWA buses to school.

In Lebanon, the pressure on the Agency to do more to address the impact of the economic and financial crisis on the Palestine refugee community is becoming unbearable. Protests and acts of violence directed against UNRWA are, at times, forcing my colleagues to close our installations. Illegal emigration of Palestine refugees is rising.

In Jordan, the pandemic left deep scars on the labour market. Unemployment is soaring, particularly for females and young people. Child labour and early marriage are reportedly on the rise.

Despite those challenging operating environments, UNRWA remains the lifeline for one of the most underprivileged and desperate communities in the region. Going to school, getting health services or receiving a food parcel are, for many Palestine refugees, their only sources of normality. They look to UNRWA for that normality.

For over 70 years, UNRWA has been a source of opportunity and hope for a better future for generations of Palestine refugees. With the support of Member States, the Agency has contributed to one of the most successful human development stories in the region. From educating over 2 million Palestine refugee girls and boys, to universal infant vaccination and reduced maternal mortality that exceeds global standards, there is a lot for which we can all be proud.

During armed conflicts, the Security Council's support has enabled UNRWA to provide shelter and protection and helped rebuild destroyed neighbourhoods and communities. The psychosocial support that Palestine refugee children receive is key to their mental well-being and essential for their ability to learn, and the quality of the education that UNRWA students receive is praised by such reputable validators as the British Council, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Bank. On average, they outperform their peers by one year of learning.

In Syria, nearly 95 per cent of UNRWA students passed their national exams this year. Rama, from Yarmouk refugee camp, achieved the highest scores despite prolonged displacement and repeated power cuts. Success stories are everywhere, from Ghada, who is the first woman

technician in renewable energy in Gaza, to Bara'a, who joined a medical research team in Spain that is making ground-breaking progress in the fight against pancreatic cancer.

Today children and young people must be able to perform and compete in an increasingly digitalized world. UNRWA is committed to giving Palestine refugees that ability. Our information technology hub in Gaza serves the entire United Nations system and provides jobs for over 120 young women and men.

We reached gender parity in our schools a long time ago, and our 700 schools across the region comprise the only public-like educational institution to have rolled out a comprehensive human rights curriculum. While we are acutely aware that we operate in a politically charged environment, we have made unparalleled investments in promoting United Nations values and UNESCO standards across our programmes and through staff attitudes.

Today our collective achievements are at risk. For the past decade, the chronic underfunding of our programme budget has made it increasingly challenging for the Agency to fulfil the mandate given it by the General Assembly. Shifting geopolitical priorities, changing regional dynamics and the emergence of new humanitarian crises have deprioritized the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Coordinated campaigns to delegitimize UNRWA with a view to eroding the rights of Palestine refugees are increasing in frequency and in maliciousness. The Agency has also experienced more than once how a change in domestic politics can suspend support overnight.

Consequently, and despite immense outreach efforts, funding has stagnated over the last decade, forcing us to operate year after year with a shortfall of around \$100 million. Until last year, the funding gap was managed through cost control, austerity and carryover of large liabilities from one year to the next. But today we have no financial reserve. We have reached the limit of austerity and cost-control measures. Today UNRWA is facing an existential threat.

What is at stake is this: quality and principled education for over half a million girls and boys; access to health care for around 2 million Palestine refugees and a social safety net for around 400,000 of the poorest among the poor; psychosocial support for hundreds of thousands of children; job opportunities for the youth in Gaza and elsewhere; and emergency food and cash assistance for over 2 million Palestine refugees across the region to meet their humanitarian needs. What is at stake is simply the sense of normality and hope that our services bring to Palestine refugees.

A major aspect of the role of UNRWA in regional stability stems precisely from the predictability of its high-quality services. For Palestine refugees, UNRWA remains the last standing pillar of the commitment of the international community to their rights to a dignified life and to a just and lasting solution. When they see us delaying salaries, decreasing the quality of the services and unable to respond to increasing needs, they understand that the support of the international community to their plight is fading.

Despair and a sense of abandonment are growing in the refugee camps. Despair is a threat to mental wellbeing. Despair is a threat to peace and stability.

It is hard to believe that the lack of sufficient resources results solely from financial constraints. The impact of predictable services on the safety of refugees and on regional stability should suffice

to convince every Member State to commit funding to UNRWA in line with the resolutions they adopt.

Instead, the Agency continues to be under three sources of intense pressure: first, the commitment of the General Assembly to upholding the rights of Palestine refugees and its instruction to UNRWA to deliver a number of public-like services until a just and lasting solution is found; secondly, the lack of sufficient funding from Member States with which to implement the mandate and the unpredictability of most of the funding; and lastly, the objection to any perceived change in the way services are delivered. Any such change is seen as an attempt to encroach on the rights of the refugees. Hosts and refugees fear that it may lead to weakening UNRWA and, with time, dismantling it altogether. Failing to reconcile those demands will make the General Assembly mandate more and more impossible to implement.

Our ability to fulfil the General Assembly mandate lies with Member States and with their political will to fully fund our core budget. I appeal today to Member States that have reduced their funding to reconsider the impact of their decision on the region's stability. I appeal to those that have changed their political and foreign policy dynamics in the region to continue to be part of the success stories of UNRWA's education.

In a few weeks, the extension of the UNRWA mandate will be put to the General Assembly for approval. I appeal to all Member States to mobilize politically and financially to support UNRWA and to continue working towards a political solution that will benefit the region and its peoples.

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Mr. Levy: I would like to thank the Security Council, and the Chinese presidency in particular, for allowing me to share some thoughts with Council members today. The events of earlier this month covered in detail by Special Envoy Wennesland are as concerning as they are predictable. To be very clear: Israelis deserve security; Palestinians deserve security.

Month in and month out the Council meets to repeat its familiar condemnations, formulas and slogans. I want to use this opportunity to rethink and reappraise some assumptions and beliefs that may inadvertently contribute to the intractability of this conflict — to consider afresh reasons why it remains so prone to stalemate and human suffering. I suggest doing that through five concepts that may assist us in such an endeavour.

The first concept is justice. The permanent dispossession and denial of the most basic rights and freedoms of the Palestinian people will never be a recipe for achieving sustainable security. That, the illegal blockade of Gaza and the unlawful occupation represent forms of structural violence and collective punishment that we cannot ignore. While the need for a political horizon is acknowledged, the dimensions of that horizon seem to shrink and shrivel, becoming ever less ambitious. There can be no effective or prolonged approach to Gaza in isolation — it is part of the broader Israeli-Palestinian reality — whether in terms of security, the separation policy or closure. And crucially, there is a need to respect international law across the board — whether in State responses to armed threats or partisan resistance against State occupation. I would also say, in that context, that there is a need for Palestinian political renewal, internal reconciliation and

overcoming of divisions, as well as an international need to engage all relevant actors without applying unrealistic and selective preconditions.

The second concept is equilibrium. Any attempt to resume negotiations between the parties without addressing power asymmetries is a hollow and redundant exercise. As Comfort Ero, President of Crisis Group — with whom my organization, the United States/ Middle East Project, cooperates extensively — noted to the Security Council recently (see [S/PV.8913](#)) — the structural power imbalance between an occupying State and an occupied people must be acknowledged. A focus on relations of power, rather than both-sides-ism, may help offer clarity of thinking and policy.

As an example, attempts at economic confidence-building are consistently too little, too late and too ephemeral when they are attempted under conditions of permanent occupation. That defies principles of harmony and reciprocity. Especially with global resources stretched thin, the Palestinian economic predicament should really be understood as one that is primarily a function of politically imposed obstacles — on movement, borders, access to land, confiscations, demolitions and ever-expanding settlements — rather than the absence of charity.

We heard the briefing by the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Mr. Philippe Lazzarini, just now. There must be that economic commitment to a predictably resourced UNRWA capable of delivering services. That is a security necessity, but also a commitment of a political nature to Palestinian refugees who continue to be denied a solution.

The third concept is accountability. I previously had the opportunity to highlight to the Council two core problems (see [S/PV.8883](#)): a legitimacy deficit in Palestinian politics and an accountability deficit vis-à-vis Israeli policies. It is Israel's actions, as the powerful occupying party, that pre-eminently determine the direction of travel. I would suggest that profound shifts are occurring as a result of the unwillingness to hold Israel to account, not least on settlements.

Recent months have witnessed a disturbing intensification of that trend with the targeting of those least able to protect themselves and those most in the front line bearing witness to violations of international law. Following the shock expressed by the Secretary-General over the number of Palestinian children killed and maimed by Israeli forces last year, we have just seen that same trend again this month in Gaza, as noted by Special Coordinator Wennesland and Commissioner-General Lazzarini. We witnessed the killing of those who report on and expose these crimes, Shireen Abu Akleh being the latest journalist to pay with her life.

And now I would draw Council members' attention to the assault on those who document abuses and defend human rights, with Israel's actions against six prominent Palestinian civil society organizations, some funded by members in this Chamber. A terrorist designation was made by the Israeli authorities against six non-governmental organizations. A number of countries went on record that compelling evidence had not been forthcoming. Now the offices of those organizations have been raided and shuttered and their workers have been interrogated. A response limited to expressions of condemnation is too easily dismissed. It is impunity on steroids and, unfortunately, it encourages more of the same, or even worse. There really should be practical consequences at a multilateral and bilateral level. We already have a hollowed out Palestinian polity and economy, and this is now an attempt to emaciate Palestinian civil society.

The fourth concept is context. It is no exaggeration to characterize the current global disorder as a world in metamorphosis — dangerously combustible while potentially rewarding if we can be innovative while realistic. In that respect, the Abraham Accords may be many things, but they cannot be a substitute or distraction from securing peace and the rights of Palestinians. If not properly managed, normalization can risk further nurturing a misplaced Israeli sense that the Palestinians can be ignored and marginalized.

It is also the case that international law and principles purported to be universal cannot be asserted only when it is convenient, and then set aside when friends or allies appear in the role of perpetrator. Our world is too transparent; these things are noticed.

Fifthly and finally, there is the concept of architecture. I would suggest that, contrary to the prevailing perception that everything is stuck and a stalemate, in actual fact Israelis and Palestinians are passing through a quite profound transition. Talk of the eclipse of the two-State option is neither alarmist nor far-fetched, rather, it is a sober and probably a behind-the-curve rendering of the lived reality. I would say that, for Israel itself, the absence of an off-ramp on this journey towards a new paradigm should be a cause for concern — placing in jeopardy that country's future. Neither the Palestinians nor the Israelis are going to disappear, and finding a just way to live together has never been more urgent. Over time, that profound shift will most probably take every State represented here out of its comfort zone. Let me conclude by briefly explaining why.

We know of certain developments that can be both politically uncomfortable and politically salient at the same time. The increasingly weighty body of scholarly, legal and public opinion that considers Israel to be perpetrating apartheid in the territories under its control is just such a development. A designation made by Palestinian scholars and institutes and later examined and endorsed by Israeli human rights organizations, led by B'Tselem, has now become the legal designation made by Human Rights Watch and this year by Amnesty International. That is what the failure to generate accountability and to achieve two States looks like. As uncomfortable as I know it is for some, I urge the Council not to underestimate the longer-term significance and traction of what is happening. At the Human Rights Council meetings held in Geneva in March, representatives of States speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, the Group of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation all referenced that apartheid situation. It will come as little surprise if that echoes and resonates in parts of the world that have experienced apartheid and settler colonialism and gone through decolonization. It is a paradigm that will also bring the discrimination faced by Palestinian citizens of Israel into sharper relief. It must be a wake-up call.

Some 75 years ago, the United Nations offered partition as the political paradigm for the Holy Land. Today that land is de facto united under one dominion. In the absence of unprecedentedly far-reaching action to make good on partition, the successors to the Council members of today will be coming to debate the challenge of achieving equality under a reality of non-partition.

If the Council seriously considers those five principles and their implications, we may find a way out of the repetitive impasse — the familiar condemnations, formulas and slogans — and perhaps usher in a new opening and path to justice and equilibrium for Palestinians and Israelis.

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XVII. UN HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR WARNS 1.3 MILLION PALESTINIAN CHILDREN FACE RISKS AS THEY GO BACK TO SCHOOL

On 29 August, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Lynn Hasting, made the following [statement](#).

This week, over 1.3 million Palestinian children from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip will go back to school. It is a moment to anticipate, with so many girls and boys eager to learn and thrive.

But children in the West Bank and Gaza face challenges that many children across the world cannot imagine. Since the beginning of the year, 20 children were killed in the West Bank, compared to 12 during the same period last year. Currently, there are 56 outstanding demolition orders against schools where at least 6,400 children are taught in the West Bank including East Jerusalem.

In the first half of 2022 in the West Bank, the United Nations recorded 115 education-related violations including, direct or indirect firing of tear gas, stun grenades, and/or rubber-coated bullets, intimidating military and settler presences at schools, detentions, and movement restrictions preventing students from reaching their classes. Nearly 8,000 students have been impacted, increasing the risk they will drop out of school.

The latest escalation in Gaza claimed the lives of 17 children. Schools are overcrowded, with 65 per cent of schools operating on double shifts. The conditions in Gaza for children, including having lived through four escalations in hostilities during their lifetime, increase the need for specialized psychosocial support services.

Despite the many challenges faced, the youth literacy rate of Palestinians is over 99 per cent and 93.8 per cent of children graduating from primary school go on to a secondary education. Palestinian children hold in their hands the potential and drive to reimagine education, co-create new pathways for development, and transform their lives. They are tomorrow's leaders. We must do more to protect and support them, as children must not be exposed to violence or exploited for any purpose.

The United Nations wishes all children a successful and fun-filled year where their fundamental right to education is protected and realized by all. We remain committed to protect children from violence and support them to fulfill their potential.

XVIII. HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEPLORES ISRAEL'S FAILURE TO GRANT VISAS FOR UN HUMAN RIGHTS STAFF IN THE OPT

On 30 August, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet issued the following [statement](#).

Israel's refusal to issue or renew visas for UN Human Rights staff in the occupied Palestinian territory will not prevent the Office from continuing to monitor and report on the human rights situation on the ground, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said today.

"In 2020, the 15 international staff of my Office in Palestine – which has been operating in the country for 26 years – had no choice but to leave," said Bachelet. "Subsequent requests for visas and visa renewals have gone unanswered for two years. During this time, I have tried to find a solution to this situation, but Israel continues to refuse to engage."

As a Member State, Israel must cooperate in good faith with the UN and grant its officials the privileges and immunities necessary for them to independently exercise their functions. This includes an obligation to exempt UN officials from immigration restrictions and to deal with applications for visas for UN officials as speedily as possible.

"Israel's failure to process visa applications that are necessary for my staff's access is inconsistent with these standards, and I call on the Government to meet its international obligations in this regard," the UN Human Rights chief said.

Bachelet said that barring the UN Human Rights Office's international staff occurred in a context where Israeli authorities are increasingly limiting human rights "eyes and ears on the ground". There is a growing roll call of UN staff and mechanisms, non-governmental organisations and others being expelled or refused entry.

"Israel's treatment of our staff is part of a wider and worrying trend to block human rights access to the occupied Palestinian territory," Bachelet said.

"This raises the question of what exactly the Israeli authorities are trying to hide."

Last year, Israeli Forces killed 320 Palestinians, a 10-fold increase on the number killed in 2020, and injured 17,042 people, six times the 2020 figure. The UN recorded the highest number of incidents of settler violence since recording began in 2017, and arrests of Palestinians doubled. So far in 2022, Israeli forces have killed at least 111 more Palestinians.

Despite its international staff being barred, the UN Human Rights Office in Palestine is delivering on its mandated work in monitoring the State's compliance with its international human rights obligations and providing technical assistance on human rights.

"We publicly report on violations by Israel, but also on violations by the State of Palestine, by Hamas in Gaza and Palestinian armed groups. We also provide the principal support to the Palestinian Government to help it improve its compliance with international human rights obligations," Bachelet said.

“We will continue to deliver on our mandate. And we will continue to demand access to the occupied Palestinian territory for our staff, in line with Israel’s obligations as a UN Member State.”
