



General Assembly

Distr.: General
27 February 2024

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-fifth session

26 February–5 April 2024

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by International Foundation Witnesses Ashoora, 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.

[24 January 2024]

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



Violation of the Rights of Palestinian Children

Introduction

As representatives of our non-governmental organisation, we strongly condemn the brutal murder of children in Gaza, where the most children in the world have been killed in a short period of time, and the egregious violation of children's rights in the State of Palestine. Gaza; where the most children in the world have been killed in a short period of time These reprehensible acts not only result in the tragic loss of innocent lives, but also constitute a blatant violation of basic rights such as access to healthcare, education and the right to a safe and healthy life for these children. This was reported by the Ministry of Media in Gaza under the control of de facto authorities. The office reported that more than 15,000 Palestinians have been killed in the Gaza Strip since the start of hostilities, including some 6,150 children and 4,000 women . Half of Gaza's 2.3 million residents are children, and the number of children killed in the first 3 weeks of Occupying Power attacks in the territory is higher than the average number of children killed worldwide in the last 3 years.

Palestinian children are denied access to health care and their right to health is compromised by the Occupying Power closure policy, the ongoing military occupation and the repeated military offensives.

Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip do not have adequate access to health care, including many children who are permanently disabled and have suffered long-term trauma following the repeated Occupying Power military offensives on the Gaza Strip.

Occupying Power's closure of Gaza has plunged Gaza's health sector into crisis. The closure prevents vital and life-saving medical and pharmaceutical resources from entering Gaza and prevents patients and accompanying persons from leaving Gaza. The Occupying Power authorities have maintained severe restrictions on travel to and from Gaza, as well as on the import of essential materials and the export of goods, paralysing the economy.

Repeated Occupying Power military offensives, including three particularly devastating recent ground and air strikes, have devastated Gaza's infrastructure, including its healthcare system. This regular destruction of Gaza's infrastructure, combined with Occupying Power's closure policy, has led to a man-made humanitarian crisis characterised by acute water and electricity shortages, further affecting the health of patients who cannot expect to be treated in hygienic conditions or for vital and life-saving electricity-powered machinery to run uninterrupted.

However, the threat to children in Gaza goes beyond bombs and rockets. More than one million children in Gaza are affected by the water crisis, and the mortality rate of children, especially infants, due to lack of water is a major problem. About 44% of the total Palestinian population and 47% of Gaza's 2.3 million inhabitants are children . For this reason, the start of a new round of attacks by the Occupying Power has caused widespread concern about human rights violations, especially children's rights. The severity of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza has heightened concerns about even more serious violations of children's rights in the region, as this situation is leading to an increase in food insecurity, a violation of children's right to an adequate standard of living under Article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and a violation of children's right to health through attacks on water and sanitation facilities, exposing children to diseases under Article 24 of the same Convention. About 2.2 million people, including more than one million children, do not have regular access to clean water. This water scarcity and unsanitary conditions increase the risk of chronic diseases, one of the main causes of child mortality.

We call on the Human Rights Council to launch a comprehensive and thorough investigation into these appalling events. It is imperative that decisive action is taken to put an end to these atrocities and ensure the immediate cessation of these grave human rights violations in the region.

Furthermore, we call on the Council to use its influence and resources to exert diplomatic pressure on the responsible parties and urge them to comply with international laws and conventions protecting the rights of children in conflict zones.

Referring to human rights and international law documents on the protection of children from the Occupying Power in Jerusalem, we can present the following documents, among others, which members should fulfil, but we experience that the Occupying Power ignores them.

1. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC): This convention, signed and ratified by many countries, especially the members of the United Nations (UN), provides comprehensive rights and guarantees for the protection of children. Any violation of these rights is condemned.
2. International human rights obligations: In documents such as the "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights" and the "International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights", which also deal with the rights of children, any violation of these obligations by the Occupying Power, whether alone or in co-operation with others, is considered undesirable and unacceptable.
3. United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions: Resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) calling on the Occupying Power to bring its actions into line with international obligations and human rights documents.

The reference to these documents and obligations can serve as a legal basis for supporting children whose rights are violated by the Occupying Power in the State of Palestine. To summarise, international human rights and legal frameworks, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), various international human rights obligations and United Nations Security Council resolutions, serve as essential tools to advocate for the protection of children in the face of violations committed by the Occupying Power in Jerusalem. These documents set out comprehensive rights and obligations and condemn all acts that undermine the well-being and fundamental rights of children. Utilising these frameworks provides a solid legal basis to hold the Occupying Power accountable and achieve justice for the children affected.

We sincerely hope that the Human Rights Council will take up this urgent matter promptly and decisively to promote accountability and justice and protect the most vulnerable members of our global community.

Furthermore, we urge the Council to take immediate and decisive action to prevent this appalling situation from continuing. All parties involved should be encouraged to co-operate in creating conditions that prevent children from being forced to live in dangerous environments.

Furthermore, we call on the Council to establish an independent and transparent mechanism to monitor construction activities and military actions in the affected areas of the State of Palestine. This measure aims to improve transparency and accountability regarding military operations and their impact on the civilian population.

We believe that joint efforts to combat human rights violations in this region can help lay the foundation for peace and security. We hope that the Human Rights Council will pursue these issues seriously and with the utmost vigour.

Furthermore, we emphasise the need to provide humanitarian assistance and allow unhindered access for aid organisations to provide the necessary support to the affected population, especially children and vulnerable communities. The international community should work together to support initiatives aimed at rebuilding infrastructure, providing medical care and providing educational opportunities for affected children.

It is important that the Human Rights Council plays a proactive role in promoting diplomatic dialogue between the relevant actors in order to find a sustainable and just solution to the conflicts in the region. Efforts should be directed towards promoting a lasting peace that respects the dignity and rights of all people, regardless of their origin or faith.

Recommendations and Conclusions

In conclusion, we call on the Human Rights Council to take the lead in addressing these pressing issues, seeking justice and working to protect the rights and well-being of affected people in the region.

Recommendations and possible solutions to promote human rights and prevent discrimination against children and people in the affected regions include

1. Establish an independent international committee: Establish an independent international committee involving human rights organisations, governments and international organisations to investigate the human rights situation in the region comprehensively and in detail and make actionable recommendations.
2. Facilitate access to humanitarian aid: Ensure that aid organisations have unhindered access to provide vital humanitarian aid to vulnerable populations, especially children.
3. Promote education: Create education programmes that enable children to access education and build a better future for themselves.
4. Raise awareness: Raise awareness of the human rights situation and human rights violations in the region through media and social networks.
5. International pressure: Increasing international pressure on governments and actors to respect human rights and actively participate in the management of humanitarian crises.

With international coordination and active engagement of the global community, these recommendations and solutions can help to achieve the goals of human rights protection and address the social challenges in the affected regions.
