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Consideration of reports of States parties

Additional replies of Israel to the list of issues in relation to its combined fifth and sixth periodic reports*

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Introduction

1. Hereinafter is the reply to the Additional List of Issues of February 2024, in relation to the combined Fifth and Sixth periodic reports of the Government of the State of Israel, submitted in September 2023, to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in accordance with the requirements of Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereinafter – the “Convention” or the “CRC”) and the CRC treaty-specific guidelines (CRC/C/58/Rev.3).

2. This Report was compiled by the Office of the Deputy Attorney General (International Law) at the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), in cooperation with other government ministries and agencies.

Reply to paragraph 2 of the additional list of issues (CRC/C/ISR/Q/5-6/Add.1)

3. Before answering the specific questions presented, it is important to address the October 7th terrorist attack on Israel.

4. On Saturday (Shabbat) morning of October 7, 2023¹, as Israel was celebrating the Jewish religious holiday of 'Simchat Torah', Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups launched massive rocket barrages directed at the civilian population in multiple Israeli cities. Simultaneously, approximately 3,500 terrorists breached Israel's sovereign territory by land, sea and air from the Gaza Strip. These terrorists invaded over 20 Israeli communities, military bases, as well as the sites of two music festivals, with the sole purpose of murdering, raping and maiming as many Israeli civilians and foreign nationals as possible, and taking hostage men, women and children, including older persons and Holocaust survivors. Hamas terrorists were sent into Israel with the explicit goal to slaughter defenseless families – mothers, fathers, children and older persons. Tragically, entire families were murdered in just a few hours, and many lost their loved ones or were left permanently injured.

5. On October 7th, Israel and the entire world bore witness, in real time, to the brutal murder and maiming of civilians, including children and infants, in cold-blood in their own homes. An unimaginable amount of graphic evidence reveals the commission of countless incidents of rape, sexual and gender-based violence, extreme degradation and humiliation, as well as the taking of hostages and torture. The widespread commission of brutal acts of sexual violence against civilians has been widely documented, including by first-hand testimonies, and confirmed by the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.² Innocent civilians, including infants, were burned alive beyond recognition. Hamas terrorists proudly videotaped themselves holding infants who they had taken hostage, and confessed to the world their willful and premeditated murder of Israeli children.

6. Since the horrific onslaught that began on October 7th, 2023, Hamas and other terrorist organizations in Gaza have continued to attack Israel, including by indiscriminate rocket fire directed towards civilian population centers. Since the beginning of the hostilities (as of May 2024), more than 10,000 rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip with the aim of killing as many Israelis as possible. A similar number of rockets was launched towards the north of Israel. To date, 42 people were killed in the north of Israel, and 250 were injured. On Saturday, July 27, 2024, a Hezbollah rocket launched from Lebanon killed 12 children on a soccer field in Majdal Shams.

7. Since October 7th, Hamas and other terrorist organizations have caused damage of an unprecedented scale to Israeli civilian homes and infrastructure, with entire communities

¹ Henceforth, "October 7th".

² Mission Report – "Official visit of the Office of the SRSG-SVC to Israel and the occupied West Bank". Available at: <https://www.un.org/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=nOjRpkBU6sBvYI-8tKQvQkgwzasqPDIJBexQzfJa2zU.&dl>.

destroyed. As of June 27, 2024, approximately 130,000³ residents of towns in southern and northern Israel remained displaced from their homes since October 7th. It may be years before they are able to return to their homes and rebuild their lives and communities. Sirens continue to go off across the country as rockets, missiles and drones are launched daily against Israel from several fronts.

8. More than 1,200 people, the majority of whom are civilians, men and women, including older persons and children, were brutally murdered in their homes and in the music festivals during the October 7th attack and the days that followed.

9. On that same day, 251 persons were taken hostage to the Gaza Strip, including infants, children, women and entire families, many of whom have since been executed by their captors. While in captivity, many of the hostages were tortured, sexually abused and ill-treated. To this day, 115 hostages remain held in Gaza, exposed to torture and other cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment. The GOI's response to the specific questions will present information and data concerning children, including those who were taken hostage.

Reply to paragraph 2 (a) of the additional list of issues

10. 43 infants, children and youth under the age of 18 were brutally murdered during the attack of October 7th (25 boys and 18 girls). According to Data of the Ministry of Health, since October 7th until June 13th, 2024, 651 children and youth (ages 0 to 20) have required medical treatment as a result of the October 7th attack or other military actions against Israel. A total of 19,221 children and youth (9,918 boys and 9,303 girls) have been recognized as victims of hostilities by the National Insurance Institute.

11. As a result of the October 7th attack, dozens of children were orphaned. 221 children and youth (118 boys and 103 girls) lost one parent and an additional 17 children and youth (10 boys and 7 girls) lost both their parents on that day.

12. In Israel, the continued care for the families orphaned by the loss of a parent who was a victim of hostilities is governed by the *Compensation for Victims of Hostilities Law 5730-1970*, which is overseen and implemented by the National Insurance Institute. Children and youth who have been orphaned by the loss of their parents are entitled to a variety of rights and benefits, including grants and allowances, financing and provision of mental and emotional treatments, reimbursements of medical expenses, legal assistance, participation in schoolwork and educational expenses. A child's eligibility for the benefits varies depending on whether they are an orphan by the loss of one or both parents, as well as the specific circumstances of each case.

Reply to paragraph 2 (b) of the additional list of issues

13. On October 7th, Hamas and other terrorist organizations took 251 persons – 159 males and 92 females - hostage to the Gaza Strip. Among the hostages taken, were 32 infants, children and youth - 13 boys and 19 girls-who at the time were between the ages of nine (9) months and 18 years old.

14. On that same date, 97 children and youth had one or both parents taken hostage by Hamas and other terrorist organizations.

15. As of July 30, 2024, two children are still being held hostage: Ariel and Kfir Bibas, who were only four (4) years old and nine (9) months respectively, when brutally taken

³ The Knesset research and Information center, updated figures on evacuees from southern and northern Israel, July 3, 2024. As of June 27, 2024, approximately 143,000 persons were eligible for evacuation from their homes and communities (about 68,500 of them are from localities in northern Israel and approximately 74,500 are from localities in the region surrounding Gaza). Also on that date, approximately 130,000 persons were registered as evacuees and remained displaced from their homes since October 7th. 22,800 of them resided in hotels (about 17,600 of them are from localities in northern Israel and about 5,200 are from localities in southern Israel). Additionally, about 51,000 evacuees from northern localities and about 70,000 evacuees the southern localities were staying in the community, in interim residential solutions and a small number of them have returned to their homes.

hostage on October 7th, with their mother, Shiri. Their father, Yarden Bibas, was also taken hostage. None of whom has returned to date.

16. As of July 30, 2024, 115 hostages, men, women and children are still being held by Hamas and other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip, for over 300 days.

17. Note that some of the children released from captivity reported that they were forced to watch horrifying videos of the October 7th massacre while they were under the duress of armed threats. Children also reported that they were drugged and physically branded on their bodies by the terrorists.

18. Israeli Government Resolution (“GR”) No. 982 regulated the initial assistance to the families of the hostages and missing persons. Following this resolution, GR No. 1058 was later adopted, establishing a designated Directorate to head the issue of hostages, missing persons, returnees and their families, and coordinating the Government's responses which would be provided to these families. The Directorate works to highlight the well-being of the children of the families of the hostages as well as the well-being and rehabilitation of the children and youth who have returned from captivity.

19. The Directorate is staffed by representatives of the National Insurance Institute, and the Ministries of Health, Education and Welfare and Social Security, in order to provide assistance and support to those in need.

20. In response to the October 7th attack, and as a result of the large number of hostages and missing persons, and until the identification process was completed, the Child Online Protection Bureau Hotline (105), was temporarily converted into a hotline which responded to calls and assistance requests from family members looking for a missing relative, in cooperation with the Israel Police and the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security (“MoWaSS”).

Creating a coordinated procedure for supporting children and youth who have returned from captivity

21. The treatment of children that returned from captivity involves medical, mental health and social aspects, which require an immediate response within the hospitals, and subsequently tailored care services within the community. An inter-ministerial team was established in order to formulate a framework plan for hosting, caring and assisting the children and youth who have returned from captivity. The framework was conducted jointly by the IDF, the Ministries of Health, Education, Welfare and Social Security, Justice, the National Insurance Institute and the Prime Minister's Office. The Ministry of Health (MoH) and the hospitals were prepared to receive the children and youth who returned from captivity and provided tailored medical and psychological care to each and every one. The coordination of the long-term care is done by a social worker, who is assigned to each of the returnees, whose job it is to complete the holistic therapeutic response. The procedure has been continuously updated and adapted following lessons learned from ongoing experience.

Reply to paragraph 2 (c) of the additional list of issues

22. Described hereinafter are the main measures taken by the Israeli Government and Government Ministries to ensure that children and families affected by the October 7th attacks and/or hostage taking, have access to healthcare and trauma-focused mental health services.

Prime Minister's Office – Round Table

23. In view of the state of emergency and the deep concern for the condition of the affected children and youth, and in order to formulate immediate appropriate responses to their unique needs, as early as October 12, 2023, the Prime Minister's Office established a multi-sectoral round table tasked with addressing the issue of “Children and Youth during War”.

24. About 200 members participate in this round table, among them, representatives of Government Ministries, local authorities, civil society organizations and youth representatives. The table is jointly led by the Government Coordinator for Children and Youth Rights at the Ministry of Justice, and by the Director General (DG) of the NGO

National Council for the Child. Depending on the issue at hand, some discussions conducted as part of the roundtable were held in a broad forum, while others were conducted in small and focused sessions.

25. Below are some of the main recommendations formulated at the round table:

(a) Preservation of the educational frameworks and services regularly provided to children and youth – It was recommended to limit the use of schools for non-educational purposes (such as a temporary housing facility, for example), in order to ensure the maintenance of an emotional educational continuum for children and youth. Use of education frameworks for other purposes would be made only as a last resort, after all other options were exhausted;

(b) Evacuation of children from their homes - If at a later stage, further evacuation of children from their homes is required, the following directives shall be observed:

- The protection of children and youth must be ensured according to the round table's recommendations regarding the protection of children in the places to which they were displaced. For example, it must be ensured that anyone who comes in contact with children and youth in the temporary housing facilities obtain employment permits in accordance with the *Prevention of Employment of Sex Offenders in Certain Institutions Law*. It was further noted that officials in these temporary housing facilities shall carry identification badges. Additionally, in accordance with a decision of the Permanent Director Generals Committee for Children and Youth, an inter-governmental team led by the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministries of National Security and Justice was established in order to best address this issue;
- Preservation of the displaced community's structure – Efforts must be made to preserve, as much as possible, the structure and composition of an original displaced community by assigning it to temporary housing facilities in accordance with their existing community structures (for example, evacuation based on neighborhoods or school communities), while considering the needs and preferences of the internally displaced persons. Among other reasons, this is intended to prevent children from being further separated from their natural and familiar environment, their friends, familiar educational figures, etc.;
- Regular contact between the evacuated and hosting authorities – The evacuated and hosting authorities shall conduct close and continuous contact, in order to enable the flow of information and to provide regular and orderly support and services to the displaced families and children. Thus, for example, underlining the importance of free flow of necessary information regarding children who require special attention or supervision (such as children known to the welfare system, children with disabilities etc.);

(c) It was recommended to establish a common, uniform and updated database of displaced children/persons, in order to enable the relevant authorities to best identify the needs of the child population in an age-appropriate manner and serve as a basis for promoting appropriate services for the children;

(d) The round-table discussed the regulation of information flow between the various relevant ministries – and in particular the Ministry of Education (“MoE”), the MoWaSS, the MoH, the Ministry of Defense and the National Insurance Institute, in order to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the particular status of internally displaced children;

(e) The establishment of a designated digital tool to coordinate responses – In accordance with the needs identified at the round table, a questionnaire was circulated to map the services provided to the youth housed in temporary housing facilities. Based on the replies to the questionnaire, a digital dashboard was established that presents up-to-date data on the number of children and youth staying in each temporary housing facility, as well as on every hotel in which displaced persons were housed and regional information. The digital dashboard also provides a breakdown of the services provided to youth (ages 13 to 18) in each hotel - aggregated by type and field of service, and target audiences. It was

recommended to expand this platform to all ages and also to Israeli children and youth who were not displaced from their homes, country-wide;

(f) A dedicated reference to different groups was recommended - either by age groups (such as preschoolers, teenagers etc.) or by social groups (such as ultra-Orthodox and Arab populations), as these groups each have distinct needs to be addressed;

(g) The importance of youth participation in the process of identifying and addressing their needs and making them an essential part of any work regarding their population was recognized;

(h) The representatives noted the importance of the Permanent Director General's Committee for Children and Youth in obtaining an all-government approach to children and youth issues, and to address and make decisions regarding urgent inter-ministerial issues;

(i) This round table continues to work and supervise the implementation of its recommendations, to address new issues that arise and to provide the required solutions.

Measures taken by the Knesset's Special Committee on the Rights of the Child

26. Since October 7th, the Knesset's Special Committee for the Rights of the Child has held discussions on many issues concerning the rights of the child in light of the war, inter alia: Preparation to provide mental health services and psychosocial support to the victims of the Iron Swords War in the short and long terms (23.10.23); Educational services for children evacuated due to the war (30.11.23; 6.11.23); Children and youth in out-of-home placement (boarding schools and foster families) during the war (7.11.23); Food security for pupils in the absence of schools during the war (8.11.23; 13.11.23); Protection of children and youth at hotels and temporary housing facilities (20.11.23); Dealing with early childhood settings during the war (27.11.23); Dealing with drug and alcohol abuse among displaced youth and survivors of the October 7, 2023 massacre (28.11.23); Challenges of children on the LGBTQI- to mark the International Day Against Homophobia (20.5.24); Measures and responses for displaced children and youth during the 2024 summer vacation period (3.6.24); and more.

27. The Committee further convened meetings regarding specific needs that arose within the Arab community. For example, discussions were convened on the topic of responding to the urgent needs of the Bedouin population in the unauthorized villages in the Negev due to the war regarding physical protection, accompanying the families of persons murdered and taken hostage on October 7th and strengthening their psychological resilience (6.12.23). The Committee also held a tour of the Bedouin villages (21.1.24).

Measures taken by the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security

28. Hereinafter are the main actions taken by the Administration of Social and Personal Services for the benefit of families and children in temporary housing facilities:

(a) Informational leaflets were produced and circulated to the hotel teams about enhancing protection against sexual abuse and domestic violence. Additionally, webinars were conducted to address specific needs related to these issues;

(b) Specific instructions were given to the social worker teams at temporary housing facilities to reinforce their awareness of, and compliance with, the *Youth Law*, ensuring that their actions and reports align with the requirements of the law;

(c) Dedicated guidelines were issued on legal procedures, with an emphasis on minors whose parents are undergoing separation or divorce disputes. These guidelines focused particularly on contact arrangements with both parents and the implementation of judicial decisions;

(d) The MoWaSS entered into special emergency contracts with three (3) operators to set up therapy circles for children ages 3-12 in the temporary housing facilities providing after-school activity hours. Within a short time, 68 circles were established, serving over 2,200 children of various ages. These contracts also included the establishment of guidance and support groups for parents in the temporary housing facilities. During the peak period, about 20 such groups were active.

29. Measures taken by the Ministry's Tel Aviv-Jaffa and Central District and the Jerusalem District have included, *inter alia*:

(a) The Tel Aviv-Jaffa and Central District at the MoWaSS, together with the hosting authorities, accompanied the internally displaced persons in 120 hotels throughout the district during the initial peak period. In the first three months, this was done intensively, involving outreach to the displaced persons' original communities to gather basic data, as well as daily on-site presence to address all their various needs - such as material necessities, reorganization at the new housing facilities and emotional and social support;

(b) Efforts were made to establish a healthy routine within the hotels by creating recreational and educational settings for children and youth up to the age of 18, offering appropriate tools to address the emotional situation that resulted from the evacuation, and to attempt to address any preexisting complex situations;

(c) Increased focus was placed on enhancing parental supervision and involvement in the children's daily lives at the hotels;

(d) Designated detection spaces were set up in places with groups of displaced youth in order to identify detached youth. In these spaces, trained youth instructors utilized discourse and adaptive activities, to provide targeted care and attention to the children and youth through dedicated sessions;

(e) The Jerusalem District established a designated point of contact with the relevant departments and headquarters to continually reassess the needs of the children and families it received, in order to ensure that the support and responses were appropriately provided and adjusted.

30. Measures taken by the Haifa and the Northern District, have included, *inter alia*:

(a) The Northern District departments were instructed to prepare in advance lists of at-risk populations and individuals already known to the welfare services, including families with children at risk or with disabilities, as well as cases of domestic violence;

(b) Regarding children with disabilities – early evacuation was offered to persons with disabilities and their families, thus allowing families with children with disabilities to be displaced from the bombarded town of Kiryat-Shmona prior to the city's official evacuation;

(c) During the evacuation, these departments maintained contact with at-risk populations, to assess their situations and needs, and to monitor their integration into the temporary housing facilities, such as community centers and day care centers;

(d) A district evacuation and reception team, along with relevant MoWaSS employees, was stationed daily at the temporary housing facilities. The team was directed to identify children at-risk and to provide direct responses to children and youth in emergency situations;

(e) The employees of the relevant hotels received regular information and instructions, including training and professional support to help detect and prevent situations of risk, neglect and violence;

(f) After-school frameworks and parental support groups were established in temporary housing facilities and separate groups were established to enhance the protection of children and teenagers in the hotels;

(g) Designated budgets were allocated to hosting authorities to establish shelters and services for the internally displaced population, with a particular focus on at-risk populations, including older persons, children, youth, victims of domestic violence and persons with disabilities.

MoWaSS's Disability Administration

31. The Disability Administration's housing department evacuated approximately 11 housing care facilities. The residents of these frameworks were accompanied and supported financially and received other necessary assistance during the evacuation.

32. About 10 children from a housing care facility for children with disabilities in the city of Sderot were evacuated to a designated facility in the city of Ramla. There, they were provided with leisure activities, classes adapted to their abilities and leaves for family visits. Later, a specialized classroom was established in order to ensure educational continuity while the children attended their original schools on a bi-weekly basis.

33. Both staff and residents received guidance on dealing with crisis and trauma.

Youth and Young Adults Service – Rehabilitation, Companion and Prevention Administration

34. During the current state of emergency, Israeli youth were exposed to and experienced extremely difficult and traumatic events, including significant personal, family and community losses. In response, the Youth and Young Adults Service and Administration in the MoWaSS, provided comprehensive emergency assistance to the displaced youth, implementing active outreach both in their hotel rooms and in the public sphere.

35. Several key programs implemented by the Service and the Administration include:

(a) Detection spaces – These are designated areas in hotels or other temporary housing facilities which aim to attract youth staying there to a defined space. The space includes professional teams instructed to create an initial direct contact with youths in their surroundings with an aim to address risks, such as the use of psychoactive substances and addictions. The teams were assisted by the parents through the interface with the regular welfare representatives at the hotel;

(b) The MoWaSS Youth Counseling Hotline 118 – this hotline operated 5 days a week through the Ministry's Information and Assistance Hotline and was also available via the WhatsApp App. The hotline provided assistance by social work experts specializing in youth issues, who could provide an assessment of a teenager's condition, an initial intervention to help them cope with the difficulty and regain functionality, as well as an initial mapping of the teenager's needs. After three (3) conversations, further treatment through mediation is provided if needed;

(c) Youth Mentoring program – This program provides educational-therapeutic support to youth through personal mentoring and group activities at the hotels and at local authorities. It combines the provision of information, support, advice, guidance, assistance and training, while being sensitive to cultural differences and individual needs. The program focuses on youth who have been avoiding public spaces and sometimes even lock themselves in their rooms;

(d) Therapeutic experiential activities – The MoWaSS, in collaboration with several associations, operates trauma treatment workshops and emotional trauma-oriented therapeutic activities for youth staying in hotels, with the purpose of providing them with the tools to build emotional resilience. These activities aim to help youth process emotions without requiring a conscious emotional discourse;

(e) Multidisciplinary youth vocational center – This daily, short-term rehabilitative treatment framework helps at-risk youth develop vocational skills through the provision of employment opportunities.

(f) Workshops on sexuality during wartime for youth and therapeutic teams – These workshops address the impact of war-related stress and its effect on sexuality, and help identify at-risk teenagers while fostering open dialogue.

Measures taken by the Ministry of Health (MoH)

Medical treatment by Health Funds (HMOs)

36. Displaced families and children who were relocated to hotels have received medical assistance from the Health Funds (HMOs) within the geographical area in which they were temporarily placed.

37. In locations where the availability of medical care was relatively limited or in places hosting populations that experienced significant trauma from the events of October 7th,

clinics were set up directly in the hosting hotels. For example, dozens of new clinics were established in Jerusalem, the Dead Sea area, and even in Eilat which is located in southern Israel, where a child health center was established, with physicians who arrived from Schneider Children Medical Center near Tel Aviv-Jaffa to provide the necessary healthcare. These clinics offered services and treatments from family physicians, pediatricians and mental health professionals.

38. Access to such clinics was not restricted by HMO affiliation. Special efforts were made to assist displaced persons with any medical need, including assistance in expediting appointments, providing medications, and supplying medical equipment, among others. When necessary, medical service was provided in hotel rooms, such as in cases where patients were unable or unwilling to leave their rooms due to anxiety or trauma.

39. Digital health and telemedicine services were expanded to ensure maximum accessibility in all aspects, covering primary medicine, consultations and the supply of medicines.

40. Information systems were adapted to enable the rapid transfer of medical information between HMOs, ensuring continuity of care for patients who required care at the temporary housing facilities. The HMOs allowed the transfer of information in order to maintain the continuity of treatment across different clinics, whether located at the hotel or near the accommodation facility, or to an existing clinic facility.

41. HMOs also prepared for extreme scenarios that have been raised as possible in the context of the ongoing multi-front conflict, such as a general blackout, to ensure that it can provide all children with lifesaving medical equipment in case of further evacuations.

42. In order to reduce financial barriers to access to medical services, service providers were instructed to defer payment-participation debt payment, for this population.

Mother and child health care stations ("Tipat Halav")

43. A few days after the October 7th attack, all service providers across the country were instructed to provide assistance to the population regardless of where they receive routine treatment. Technical changes were implemented to enable the treatment and transfer of information of displaced persons at every mother and child health care station of any service provider, regardless of their usual affiliations, HMO, geographic location, station or any other affiliation.

44. Transfer of digital information – To facilitate such cross-reception of patients, the MoH initiated a process of transferring digital information on vaccinations among the computer systems of all service providers. This transfer of information enabled every service provider to access and review the vaccination history of the displaced persons, ensuring continuity of care.

45. Opening of new mother and child health care stations – During the war, new stations were established by the various service providers in locations where persons were displaced to. This effort aimed to adapt the layout of the services to the affected populations and enhance accessibility. Additionally, three new mother and child health care stations were opened in the Dead Sea hotels area, as well as additional stations in the hotel areas of Shefaim, Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Herzliya and Eilat.

46. Teams from the relevant HMOs conducted routine assessments of the needs of the internally displaced persons at all temporary housing sites. They worked in coordination with the HMOs and the MoH to adapt the various health services to effectively meet these needs.

Mental Health Care

47. The MoH rapidly developed mental health services to those affected by the October 7th attack. Resilience centers in the south and north, which usually provide responses at the community level for emergencies, both for community and individual resilience, expanded their services to support their communities and were even relocated with their communities. A national therapeutic resilience center was also established to offer a broad range of services to anyone in need of treatment. The MoH increased the number of child care workers in these

centers threefold. By June 2024, over 17,000 children (ages 0-18 years) had received treatment at these centers. Additionally, a call center was established which contacted approximately 30,000 direct victims, offering treatment and psychological support.

48. Mental health medical centers' teams, which included professional therapists, were deployed to the temporary housing hotels, where they provided services to both children and adults.

49. Extensive efforts were made to integrate many volunteer mental health professionals into the existing systems, while ensuring that all treatment met professional standards and that the volunteers were properly vetted, as required by law. Additionally, the HMOs established clinics near the hotels and provided additional services for children and adults.

50. The MoH has launched a national mental health plan to expand services, with the aim of doubling the scope of services provided, increasing the number of interns in the psychiatry and psychology fields, improving the public mental health system, and opening additional clinics to provide treatment for both children and adults. The plan includes comprehensive training on trauma and trauma-informed care for all health system staff. It emphasizes the importance of promoting mental health and prevention at the community level, especially among children and parents.

51. Nine (9) crisis intervention centers for intensive clinical care were established country-wide. These centers treated dozens of children who experienced war-related trauma and internally displaced persons whose mental health deteriorated as a result of their displacement.

52. The MoH has provided extensive training to mental health providers, education providers and pediatricians who treat children affected by mental trauma.

Measures taken by the Ministry of Education (MoE)

Services and solutions for displaced pupils

53. The MoE has defined and maintains a number of educational measures for the benefit and wellbeing of internally displaced children.

54. Establishment of "Together Centers" - Educational frameworks were established in hotel facilities, with each center assigned a MoE director. The centers maintain a daily educational routine tailored to pupils of all ages and characteristics and according to their changing needs. A routine adapted to the circumstances is considered an important step in increasing the emotional resilience of the displaced children and their families. The MoE has defined six geographic districts within the country, each responsible for managing the education centers in the temporary housing facilities located under their coverage area. Each district was responsible for mapping its needs and deploying teaching staff, including teachers, kindergarten staff, counselors, treatment teams and additional personnel such as IDF teachers, volunteers, etc. who were specially recruited for this service. Essential learning equipment, including personal computers, printers, furniture, was also mapped and provided to the facilities.

55. Development of additional and tailored learning solutions – As part of this phase, several steps were taken to adapt and expand learning opportunities, including:

- Streamlining kindergartens operations at the temporary housing centers and integrating pupils into the existing educational institutions at the hosting local authority;
- Opening 48 new temporary schools nationwide;
- Addressing the educational needs of pupils with difficulties in integrating into the formal MoE's learning frameworks, by creating small study groups with learning and remedial content;
- Providing an appropriate social environment in an informal after-school hours setting;
- Providing educational reinforcement outside of regular school hours.

56. The following key measures were implemented to support pupils entitled to the special education services integrated in the temporary housing facilities:

- The MoE, in cooperation with the local authorities, compiled a document detailing a model for frontal learning at times of emergency for pupils who are entitled to special education services, in accordance with the individual curricula and ensures accessibility for pupils with disabilities;
- Displaced pupils with disabilities that are entitled to special education services, continue to receive, to the extent possible, the support and services they were previously prescribed as part of their eligibility, adjusted to their changing needs. This support is provided both in the hosting educational institutions and in the "Together Centers" in the hosting authorities, and includes:
 - Teaching and treatments – adapted teaching or therapeutic treatments from health professionals, including arts therapy;
 - Educational assistants - educational assistants who are assigned during routine times continued their work during times of emergency, and where possible, by the same assistant who normally work with these pupils prior to the time of emergency;
 - Individual accessibility – alternative technological responses were provided for pupils who previously received supportive replacement communication technology equipment as part of the individual accessibility that they are entitled to, but their equipment was left behind in their homes during the evacuation or was damaged;
 - A Temporary Provision under the *Special Education Law* regarding the automatic annual extension of eligibility for special education services was approved by the Knesset;
 - The MoE holds training sessions and conferences to support education and treatment teams, publishes teaching materials and digital learning resources on the Special Education Division's website and organizes supportive webinars and workshops in various languages, including sign language;
 - A national information center was established to provide a dedicated response to inquiries from parents of special education pupils, and to provide emotional support through specialist therapists from the Special Education Division.

57. Responses to information requests and support by the MoE:

- The MoE produced an informational document for the education staff, detailing a range of activities in educational, emotional and social fields tailored to different age groups and the pupils' profiles. Initially published daily, this document was later issued on a weekly basis and was made available on the Ministry's emergency portal together with all related emergency information;
- The MoE activated a dedicated support helpline to address emotional and general issues for education teams, parents and pupils. In addition, the MoE conducted informative meetings and webinars for different audiences;
- The MoE regularly held a "partners forum" that included representatives from staff and related internal units, local and regional authorities, the association of education departments, representatives of the parents' and pupils' leaderships, and NGOs. The forum aimed to disseminate information and updates, while addressing emerging needs and providing solutions and answers to emerging issues.

Measures taken by the Ministry of Immigration Absorption (MoIA)

58. According to the MoIA, the Ibim Absorption Center near Sderot, along with other centers near the frontline, have been evacuated for a long period of time. Youth movements guides have held daily activities in the temporary housing facilities and assisted in creating resilience among the children and youth. In addition, the MoIA has implemented the "Upward" program to support displaced immigrant youth. This program aims to identify,

support and care for displaced immigrant youth who have been detached from their usual formal and informal education frameworks and disconnected from their classmates, leading them to fall into severe emotional distress, loneliness and depression.

59. The Ministry's welfare department conducted webinars and workshops on resilience through the "Resources" association. The workshops were held in five languages: English, Spanish, French, Amharic and Russian, and covered various resilience topics such as anxieties and fears, dealing with anger, and providing relaxation tools.

60. In addition, the MoIA operates educational afternoon programs in the schools to enable immigrant pupils to reinforce their schoolwork while providing them with social and emotional support. As part of a temporary housing program, special attention was given to accompanying immigrant families, including children and youth with special needs, through a social worker, and accompanying families through assistance in the exercise of rights, mediation, placement in educational settings and more.

Reply to paragraph 2 (d) of the additional list of issues

61. According to data provided by the National Emergency Authority (NEA), as of November 1, 2023, a total of 253,000 people were displaced from their homes. Of this number, approximately 88,000 people were evacuated to hotels, about 70,000 vacated their homes independently to various settings and 94,000 were displaced to other communities. Since October 7th, 2023, 51,547 children and youth from southern and northern Israel were displaced and vacated their homes. As of May 26, 2024, there were 7,976 children and youth staying in 333 hotels and temporary housing facilities across the country, with an addition of 24,867 displaced children and youth and those who vacated their homes remaining in the community.

62. The evacuation decision was made by the security authorities, and according to Government Resolutions, that retrospectively confirmed the evacuation and assigned tasks related to the evacuation to the various relevant ministries. The first two Government Resolutions, Resolution No. 950 (12.10.23) and Resolution No. 975 (18.10.23), retrospectively approved the IDF's "Safe Distance" plans for the evacuation of residents from the border with the Gaza Strip and the border with Lebanon (respectively).

GR No. 950 (12.10.23) "National action plan for the evacuation of the population located near the Gaza Strip border and its absorption – 'Iron Swords'"

63. This Resolution affirms the "Safe Distance South" evacuation plan for localities⁴ within a range of 0-4 km from the Gaza Strip border. It covered the evacuation of 24 localities, comprising 15,818 residents. This evacuation began on October 7th, 2023.

64. The IDF conducted the actual evacuation, while the NEA decided on the placement of the internally displaced persons in the various temporary housing facilities based on the availability of hotels, hostels and boarding schools. The Government determined the daily operational costs and hospitality services rates and full economy, and defined tasks for the MoE, the MoWaSS and other relevant ministries.

65. This Resolution also stipulates that the MoWaSS apply Section 31 of the 'Hotel Guest' Resolution (GR 4877 of 2012, which, inter alia, pertains to the evacuation of persons with disabilities and special needs living in the community) to the entire population in need of social services departments, as well as Section 32 of the 'Hotel Guest' Resolution to all those staying in the institutions of the MoWaSS. Additionally, the Resolution states that the MoE must formulate a plan in coordination with the Ministry of Finance, to provide appropriate educational responses to displaced pupils staying in the temporary housing centers.

66. With regard to the second phase, the Resolution provides that a resident whose permanent residence is in an area between 0-7 km from the Gaza Strip border, and who

⁴ The list of localities designated for evacuation: Nahal Oz, Erez, Nir-Am, Mefalsim, Kfar Gaza, Gevim, Or HaNer, Ibim (not included in the original Resolution and added by Resolution 988), Netiv Ha'Asara, Zikim, Yad Mordechai, Karmia, Kerem Shalom, Kissufim, Holit, Sufa, Nirim, Nir Oz, Ein Hasholsha, Nir Yitzhak, Be'eri, Magen, Re'im, Sa'ad, Alumim.

vacated or was displaced from their residence between October 7-13, 2023, will receive a grant for the purpose of initial organization and needs required due to the immediate evacuation. This grant amounts to 1,000 NIS (270 USD) per family member who lived in the aforementioned residence, up to a maximum of 5,000 NIS (1,350 USD) per family.

GR 975 (18.10.23) - National action plan for the evacuation of the population in the northern area (0-5 km from the border) and its absorption - "Iron Swords" War

67. This GR addresses the evacuation of residents living near Israel's northern border and refers to two phases of evacuation:

68. The first phase – a retrospective reference to the Minister of Defense's decision to evacuate those living up to 2 km from the northern border due to the ongoing threats of rocket fire and infiltration of hostile elements into Israeli territory posed to the population in the area. This evacuation is in accordance with the "Safe distance north" plan, referring to 75% of the relevant population or 19,311 residents in the relevant localities⁵ that have been designated for evacuation.

69. Here too, the evacuation was implemented by the IDF, and the NEA managed the placement of the internally displaced persons in the various temporary housing facilities. The Resolution refers, among other things, the arrangement of temporary housing facilities, its operation and the management of the reception of IDPs who have been in the temporary housing facilities, the communication with them, the methods of payment for the temporary housing facilities and the treatment of persons in more vulnerable situations. In general, these are similar to what was set in GR No. 950.

70. The second phrase - Anticipated future needs that may arise to evacuate a population within a range of 2-5 km from the border, based on the IDF's "Safe Distance North" plan.

GR No. 978 (19.10.23) "State aid to the residents of the city of Ashkelon in light of the 'Iron Swords' war"

71. This Resolution prescribes assistance for persons belonging to two groups among the residents of Ashkelon: those without secure residential spaces and older persons without family support. It was determined that the implementation of the aid to these populations would take into consideration the availability of accommodation facilities and the fact that the purpose of the aid is to alleviate the hardships of the city residents and reinforce their resilience.

GR No. 988 (23.10.23) "State aid to the residents of the southern localities within a range of 0-7 km from the Gaza Strip border and residents of the city of Sderot in light of the "Iron Swords" war and amendment of GRs"

72. This Resolution retroactively approved the operation of the 'Breeze' ("Mashav Ruah") resilience plan for populations in localities within a range of 4-7 km from the Gaza Strip and in the city of Sderot. Initially available to part of the population in these areas, eligibility for the program was later expanded to all populations in that range. 31 localities were included in this Resolution. The plan provided accommodation and hospitality services. and, similar to the other relevant resolutions, provided the internally displaced persons the opportunity to be assimilated independently in any other framework and to receive an occupancy grant of 200 NIS (54 USD) per adult and 100 NIS (27 USD) per child per day.

The Ministry of Tourism

73. The Ministry of Tourism (MoT) established a rate to be paid to the accommodation facility for children. For the first period until November 6th, 2023, a child was defined as anyone up to the age of 18 and was paid 50% of the adult rate.

⁵ Mishgav Am, Menara, Malkia, Ma'ayan Baruch, Yiftah, Dafna, Bar'am, Kfar Gil'adi, Yir'on, Margalioth, Kfar Yuval, Dishon, Rosh HaNikra, Hanita, Arab al Aramsha, Betzet, Zar'it, Shtula, Mattat, Netu'a, Ya'ara, Shumera, Avivim, Dovev, Metula, Shlomi, Rhajar.

74. As of November 6th, 2023, the MoT implemented separate rates for toddlers (ages of 0-2) and for older children (ages of 2-18). In addition, families housed in hotels with children over the age of 12 were granted an additional separate room for a child.

75. The MoT increased payment rates partly to encourage the various accommodation facilities to provide the evacuees with access to public areas, which were also adjusted for children, such as kindergartens and educational settings.

76. The MoT also facilitated community rooms, in which the evacuees were able to use for various needs, including nurseries, etc.

Reply to paragraph 3 and 4 of the additional list of issues

77. The State of Israel follows applicable international law governing its conduct of military operations during armed conflict, i.e., the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC), in particular the rules regulating the conduct of hostilities, often termed International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Accordingly, the State of Israel applies the rules derived from the principles of distinction, precautions and proportionality in carrying out attacks.

78. The IDF has incorporated the rules of LOAC into all aspects of its military operations, including through legal training, operational procedures and plans, ongoing legal advice to different levels of IDF command, and robust and independent mechanisms to investigate allegations of IDF misconduct. In contrast, Hamas and other terrorist groups who are parties to the conflict willfully and systematically violate these rules by embedding their military assets within heavily populated areas such as within schools, places of worship, Hospitals and UN facilities, and carrying out their military activities amongst, behind, and beneath the civilian population.

79. Israel remains committed to doing its utmost to minimize harm to civilians even as Hamas, with its utter contempt for life and for the law, attempts to maximize such harm. Israel is committed to facilitating humanitarian assistance to the civilian population of Gaza in accordance with the law. This is in spite of Hamas's persistent efforts to frustrate such assistance, including by stealing and hoarding humanitarian aid and supplies for Hamas's purposes. Specifically, Israel closely monitors the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and the needs of the civilian population, and is consistently working with third parties to allow for the provision of humanitarian aid to the civilian population and ensure its effective distribution.

80. For more information regarding Israel's efforts to address the humanitarian situation in Gaza, including information on the amounts of food, water, medical supplies, shelter equipment, cooking gas and fuel that have entered Gaza since the beginning of the war, visit COGAT's website: <https://govextra.gov.il/cogat/humanitarian-efforts/home/>.

81. Accordingly, Israel is disappointed by the statements issued by the Committee on October 12, 2023 (amended on October 13, 2023) and on November 1, 2023. In its statement of November 1, 2023, the Committee insisted on criticizing Israel for the escalation of attacks against civilians in the Gaza Strip, expressing concern solely regarding children "living in the occupied Palestinian territory". The statement entirely ignored the fact that Israel ceased its effective military control and civilian presence in the Gaza Strip in 2005, and entirely disregarded Israel's efforts to evacuate civilians from areas of active hostilities. It is also very regrettable that in its statements, the Committee failed to make any mention of the harm caused to Israeli children who were murdered, taken hostage or displaced from their homes and internally displaced due to Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups' murderous attack since October 7th.