



General Assembly Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
21 July 2025

Original: English

**General Assembly
Seventy-ninth session**

Agenda item 59

Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

**Economic and Social Council
2025 session**
25 July 2024–30 July 2025
Agenda item 17
Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

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Note by the Secretary-General*

Summary

The General Assembly, in its resolution [79/229](#), entitled “Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources”, requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its seventy-ninth session, through the Economic and Social Council, on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan. The present report, prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), has been submitted in response to that resolution.

The report covers persistent Israeli practices and policies in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in particular those that may amount to violations of international humanitarian law, including international human rights law, and that affect the social and economic conditions of the people living under the Israeli military occupation. The report also covers the gendered impact of the occupation.

ESCWA would like to express its appreciation for the contributions from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Office for the

* The present report was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline for technical reasons beyond the control of the submitting office.



Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the World Health Organization, the World Bank, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Food Programme and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [79/229](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its seventy-ninth session, through the Economic and Social Council, on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan.

2. The report provides information on relevant developments from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. The report was prepared as hostilities in Gaza resumed following the end of the ceasefire, which lasted from 19 January to 18 March 2025, and as the situation in the West Bank continued to deteriorate.

II. Occupied Palestinian Territory

Israeli practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

3. The Israeli military occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, alongside the accompanying violent attacks and human rights violations perpetrated by Israeli security forces and Israeli settlers, and the long-standing discriminatory system under which Israel exercises control over Palestinians, continued to subvert the rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination.¹

4. The transfer of wide administrative powers relating to settlements and land administration from the Israeli military authorities to Israeli civilians, erasing the distinct administration of the occupied territory, further facilitates the process of annexation, in violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.²

5. In its advisory opinion of 19 July 2024, the International Court of Justice concluded that the continued presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was unlawful and that Israel was under an obligation to bring to an end its unlawful presence as rapidly as possible, cease immediately all new settlement activities and evacuate all settlers from the Occupied Palestinian Territory.³ Furthermore, the Court considered that a number of Israeli policies and practices amounted to annexation of large parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and that the unlawful policies and practices of Israel were in breach of its obligation to respect the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

Violence and use of force

6. Since 7 October 2023, 50,114 Palestinians, mostly women and children, have been killed and 113,704 have been injured during hostilities, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza. According to Israeli sources, over 1,720 Israelis and foreign nationals, including at least 310 women and 57 children, have been killed in hostilities with Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups in Gaza since 7 October 2023. Israeli sources also report that 59 of the 251 hostages abducted on 7 October 2023 are still being held captive by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups inside Gaza as at

¹ [A/79/347](#), para. 30.

² Ibid., para. 76.

³ *Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024, I.C.J. Reports 2024.*

31 March. At least 407 aid workers, including 284 United Nations staff, have been killed since October 2023.

7. In the occupied West Bank, Israeli security forces have launched widespread operations, particularly in refugee camps, including the Jenin, Tulkarm and Tubas camps. The operations began in Jenin camp on 21 January 2025 and have involved the use of airstrikes, shoulder-fired missiles and shelling.⁴ The operations, which included the largest such operation since 2002, have resulted in the displacement of over 40,000 Palestinians, the demolition of residential structures and widespread damage to civilian infrastructure. They come after a large-scale operation was carried out by Palestinian security forces in Jenin camp starting in December 2024. The operations are raising concerns about levels of mass displacement unprecedented for decades in the Occupied West Bank. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has stated that any forcible transfer or deportation of people from occupied territory is strictly prohibited and amounts to a crime under international law.⁵

8. During the reporting period, 469 Palestinians, including 76 children, were killed in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Israeli sources reported that 42 Israelis were killed, including 3 children and 18 women, in attacks by Palestinians.

9. The United Nations verified 7,873 grave violations against 4,247 Palestinian children (3,073 boys and 1,174 girls) across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem (4,853 violations), and Gaza (3,020 violations) during the reporting period. These include killings, maiming, recruitment into armed groups, and denial of humanitarian access. The psychological toll on children of witnessing death, enduring displacement and surviving injury is profound, with lifelong consequences for mental health and societal stability.⁶

10. According to OHCHR, the pattern of Israeli strikes indicates that the Israel Defense Forces may have systematically violated the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions, which are fundamental principles of international humanitarian law on the conduct of hostilities, in the course of its attacks in Gaza since 7 October 2023. Indiscriminate rocket fire by Hamas' Qassam Brigades and other Palestinian armed groups also raises concerns in this regard.⁷

Detention and ill-treatment

11. Since early November 2023, the Israel Defense Forces have taken into custody thousands of Palestinians living in Gaza, mostly men and boys, but also some women and girls. Many of the detainees, who include doctors, journalists and human rights defenders, are being held without charge or trial, often in conditions that raise concerns of abuse and violation of due process. Consistent reports have emerged regarding acts of torture and other forms of ill-treatment, including sexual and gender-based violence, waterboarding and the release of dogs on detainees, committed by Israeli authorities and in Israeli detention facilities. At least 53 Palestinian detainees

⁴ [A/HRC/58/28](#), para. 31.

⁵ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), "Mass displacement of Palestinians from northern West Bank – source of growing concern", 14 February 2025.

⁶ Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict input.

⁷ OHCHR, "Thematic report: indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks during the conflict in Gaza (October–December 2023)", 19 June 2024.

from Gaza and the West Bank are known to have died in Israeli detention since October 2023.⁸

12. As of February 2025, it was reported that 9,846 Palestinians are in Israeli custody, including 1,734 sentenced prisoners, 2,941 remand detainees, 3,369 administrative detainees held without trial, and 1,802 people held as “unlawful combatants”.⁹ In 2024, at least 700 children were reported to have been arrested, bringing the total number of detained children since the outbreak of the war to over 1,000. As of early March 2025, more than 350 children are reportedly still detained in Israeli prisons, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

13. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict received information on alleged acts of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment against Palestinian detainees, including an increase in instances of sexual violence during detention, targeting both men and women. These reports of sexual violence and other inhuman and degrading treatment could amount to sexualized torture.¹⁰ At the same time, images and accounts emerging as a result of the release of Israeli hostages during the first phase of the Gaza ceasefire agreement in February show signs of ill-treatment and severe malnourishment, reflecting the dire conditions they were subjected to in Gaza.¹¹

Destruction and confiscation of property and infrastructure

14. Both Gaza and the West Bank have endured severe destruction of property and infrastructure, compounding a humanitarian crisis with long-term repercussions. In Gaza, the scale of devastation is unparalleled. Over 70 per cent of its civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, schools and water systems, has been destroyed, displacing 1.9 million people and leaving almost the entire population reliant on humanitarian aid. According to the interim rapid damage and needs assessment conducted by the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union, some 292,000 housing units – 61.8 per cent of the total housing stock – have been reduced to rubble. High-density areas such as Gaza City and Jabaliya have experienced near-total destruction of residential and commercial zones. Damage and losses caused by the conflict between 7 October 2023 and 7 October 2024 are estimated at \$49 billion, while the total recovery and reconstruction needs are estimated at \$53.2 billion.¹²

15. Satellite images from the United Nations Satellite Centre show extensive damage to farmland and agricultural infrastructure in Gaza. They indicate that heavy vehicle tracks, razing, shelling and other conflict-related military pressures have severely damaged agricultural infrastructure, including wells, warehouses and productive assets. As of September 2024, a total of 2,672 agricultural structures had been damaged, including 1,188 wells (52.5 per cent of all wells) and 578 ha of

⁸ OHCHR, “Thematic report: detention in the context of the escalation of hostilities in Gaza (October 2023–June 2024)”, 31 July 2024.

⁹ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Humanitarian situation update No. 267: Gaza strip”, 25 February 2025.

¹⁰ Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, “UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict expresses serious concerns over reported instances of rape and other forms of sexual violence against Palestinian detainees”, 9 September 2024.

¹¹ OHCHR, “Distressing conditions of Israeli hostages and Palestinian detainees”, 10 February 2025.

¹² World Bank, European Union and United Nations, *Gaza and West Bank Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment* (February 2025).

greenhouses (44.3 per cent of all greenhouses). By December 2024, the number of damaged agricultural structures had risen to 3,047.¹³

16. Since the start of the hostilities, at least 311 installations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) have been damaged or destroyed in Gaza, including designated emergency shelters and warehouses used to store humanitarian aid. Some were destroyed in controlled demolitions carried out by the Israeli army. Key operational assets, such as vehicles and essential equipment used in humanitarian operations, were also destroyed.¹⁴

17. On 21 January, the largest Israeli operation in the occupied West Bank since 2002 began. Operation Iron Wall has since expanded across the northern West Bank in what Israeli authorities describe as a “counter-terrorism operation”. This has included the use of airstrikes and the deployment of tanks, for the first time since 2002, and the demolition of residential buildings and civilian infrastructure.¹⁵ On 9 February, Israeli operations expanded into Nur Shams camp. The Jenin, Tulkarm and Nur Shams refugee camps have been nearly emptied of their residents. Israeli military bulldozers have demolished entire neighbourhoods in “security operations”, displacing about 16,600 people from Jenin camp, 12,100 people from Tulkarm camp and 10,000 people from Nur Shams camp as at 28 February 2025, without providing alternative shelter.¹⁶

18. Israeli courts continued to order the eviction of Palestinians in East Jerusalem based on the application of discriminatory Israeli laws to occupied East Jerusalem. Thousands of Palestinians remain at risk of forced eviction. The Israeli authorities accelerated land titling in East Jerusalem. The land titling process appears to be used to advance new settlements and expand Israeli control over territory in occupied East Jerusalem. According to Ir Amim and Bimkom, in 90 per cent of land titling cases, the process was finalized in favour of Israeli settlers or the Israeli State. Land titling amounts to application of Israeli domestic laws, with long-term effect, to occupied territory.¹⁷

19. On 28 October 2024, the Knesset adopted two laws that prevent UNRWA from continuing its essential work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. These laws came into effect on 30 January 2025.

Coercive environment and population displacement

20. In Gaza, at least 1.9 million people – or about 90 per cent of the population – have been displaced during the war. Many have been displaced repeatedly, some more than 10 times.¹⁸ There were 12 evacuation orders issued by the Israeli forces in August 2024 alone, which forced more than 250,000 Palestinians to relocate, often under fire and carrying what few belongings they could.¹⁹ Humanitarian personnel, including United Nations staff, were among the displaced, further constraining aid distribution.

¹³ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), “Agricultural damage assessment in the Gaza Strip from October 7th 2023 to September 1st 2024”, October 2024.

¹⁴ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) input. See also UNRWA, “UNRWA situation report No. 165 on the situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem”, 28 March 2025.

¹⁵ See [S/2025/415](#).

¹⁶ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Humanitarian situation update No. 276: West Bank”, 27 March 2025.

¹⁷ [A/79/347](#), paras. 42–46.

¹⁸ UNRWA, “UNRWA situation report No. 164 on the situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem”, 21 March 2025.

¹⁹ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Mass evacuations in Gaza choke survival and severely constrain aid operations”, 22 August 2024.

Israeli evacuation orders have forced civilians into ever-shrinking “safe zones”, many of which have also come under attack.²⁰

21. In February 2025, the Israeli Ministry of Defense announced the creation of a new governmental body called the Voluntary Emigration Directorate, tasked with overseeing the “safe and controlled passage of Gaza residents for voluntary departure”, according to a statement from the Ministry.²¹ The Israeli Defense Minister has also publicly stated that displaced Palestinians will not be allowed to return to their homes in the occupied West Bank and that he had instructed the military “to prepare for an extended stay in the camps that have been cleared for the coming year, and not to allow residents to return”.²²

22. In parallel, in Area C, settler violence and land confiscations have displaced about 1,700 Palestinians from Bedouin, herding and farming communities.²³ Violent settler attacks, including the torching of homes and the poisoning of livestock, appear to be aimed at forcing Palestinians from their fertile agricultural land. A total of 1,382 structures were demolished, seized or forcibly self-demolished, including 138 donor-funded structures. These actions displaced 1,642 persons, including 778 children.

23. In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the discriminatory housing, property and planning laws, policies and practices of Israel, and the forced evictions arising therefrom, may violate international law, including Palestinians’ right to adequate housing, property, health, education, privacy, food, water and sanitation, and work. The demolition and seizure of Palestinian-owned structures, including internationally funded humanitarian projects, as well as structures related to income generation and the provision of essential services, entail violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law and raise concerns about the risk of forcible transfer.

Israeli settlement activity and settler violence

24. The expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, threatens the viability of a future independent Palestinian State. The competent principal organs of the United Nations have stated that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation of international law.²⁴

25. In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Israeli settlement expansion continued unabated. In East Jerusalem, 8,060 housing units were advanced, an increase from 7,920 in the prior period. In Area C, 14,080 units were advanced, up from 13,150 in the previous reporting period. Israeli authorities declared over 12,700 dunums in the Jordan Valley as State land, the largest such appropriation since the 1993 Oslo Accords. Simultaneously, there was an increase in demolitions and seizures

²⁰ OHCHR, “Gaza: increasing Israeli ‘evacuation orders’ lead to forcible transfer of Palestinians”, 11 April 2025.

²¹ Jonathan Lis and Yaniv Kubovich, “Israeli Government approves bureau for ‘Voluntary Emigration’ of Palestinians from Gaza”, *Haaretz*, 23 March 2025.

²² Amnesty International, “Israel’s destructive West Bank military operation fuels mass forced displacement of Palestinians”, 5 June 2025; and Bar Peleg and Hagar Shezaf, “Israel says 40,000 Palestinians ‘evacuated’ West Bank refugee camps, vows to stay for a year”, *Haaretz*, 23 February 2025.

²³ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Humanitarian situation update No. 240: West Bank”, 21 November 2024.

²⁴ Security Council resolution 2334 (2016). See also General Assembly resolution 78/78; and *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion*, I.C.J. Reports 2004, p. 136.

of Palestinian-owned structures, on the basis that they lacked permits (which are difficult for Palestinians to obtain), resulting in the demolition, seizure or forced demolition of 1,382 structures, 138 of which were donor-funded, displacing 1,642 persons, including 778 children.

26. On 18 June 2024, the Government of Israel implemented changes to the approval process for settlement construction in the occupied West Bank. These changes simplified the procedures and expanded the authority of the Finance Minister to approve certain stages of construction. The changes have rendered the approval processes for settlements in the West Bank essentially identical to those for developments within Israel, further integrating the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, into Israeli territory. Measures were also taken to extend the jurisdiction of Israeli local government entities over settlements, ensuring that Israeli settlers receive the same services as Israelis within Israel, further blurring the distinction between the exercise of sovereignty on Israeli territory and the administration of settlements in the occupied West Bank.²⁵

Settler violence

27. Settler violence escalated during the reporting period, particularly during the olive harvest in October, which is an important source of income for many Palestinian families. Numerous incidents were reported involving the harassment of Palestinian farmers, the burning of olive groves and the intimidation of communities near settlements. The attacks have led to economic losses, leaving over 40,000 dunums of farmland unharvested and causing extensive damage to trees, crops and properties. In most recorded cases, Israeli settlers were reportedly accompanied by Israeli security forces, who used force, including tear gas and live ammunition, against Palestinians.²⁶ The lack of accountability that settlers enjoy is part of a well-documented State-sanctioned impunity, which in turn accelerated the displacement of Palestinians and created new facts on the ground.²⁷ Amid a marked increase in incitement by Israeli authorities following the 7 October 2023 attacks, some Israeli officials appeared to condone and encourage settler violence, even urging settlement as a response to violence by individual Palestinians.²⁸

28. Thousands of settlers from “settlement defence squads”, many with a history of attacking Palestinians, have been drafted into regional army battalion units since 7 October 2023,²⁹ stoking a trend of significant attacks by known settlers armed and in Israeli military uniform.³⁰ This has been accompanied by the reported distribution by Israel of weapons to the settlement defence squads, contributing to increased violence against Palestinians.³¹ The United Nations recorded dozens of incidents of

²⁵ [A/79/347](#), paras. 10 and 11.

²⁶ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Flash appeal: Occupied Palestinian Territory”, December 2024.

²⁷ [A/79/347](#), para. 52; and OHCHR, “The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem: 7 October–20 November 2023”, December 2023.

²⁸ OHCHR monitoring. See also, “Visiting Evyatar, Ben Gvir tells settlers to ‘head for the hilltops’, expand outposts”, *The Times of Israel*, 23 June 2023; Ronen Bergman and Mark Mazzetti, “The unpunished: how extremists took over Israel”, *The New York Times*, 16 May 2024; and Anton Goodman, “Opinion: ‘Death to the Arabs’ champions of settler violence now sit in the heart of Israel’s Government”, *Haaretz*, 1 March 2023.

²⁹ OHCHR, “The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem: 7 October–20 November 2023”, para. 36.

³⁰ OCHA monitoring.

³¹ OHCHR, “The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem: 7 October–20 November 2023”, para. 36.

harassment and attacks against Palestinians carried out by members of the Israeli security forces known to be settlers.³²

Movement and access restrictions

29. Allegations of violations of Palestinians' rights to freedom of movement and access to services and livelihoods have continued to be reported across the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Closures and movement restrictions have had a direct impact on access to protection, justice, basic services and employment, further compounding the humanitarian crisis and undermining longer term development prospects.

30. Humanitarian operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, remain highly constrained by physical and administrative barriers to the movement of personnel and goods, including checkpoints, explosive ordnance, logistical challenges, visa denials, and restrictions on the registration and operations of non-governmental organizations providing humanitarian assistance. This is coupled with intensive military activity, severe security risks, Israeli restrictions on UNRWA operations, the killing of aid workers, and attacks on UNRWA premises, stifling aid delivery and coordination.

Gaza closures

31. As at 31 March, 65 per cent of Gaza was within "no-go" areas, under active displacement orders, or both. In these areas, the United Nations is required to coordinate with and notify the Israeli authorities of its movements.³³ During the reporting period, humanitarian access remained inconsistent and highly restricted. In 2024, the United Nations and its partners planned 5,320 aid movements through the Gaza Strip. Of those, 48 per cent were facilitated by the Israeli authorities, 24 per cent were denied, 19 per cent faced impediments, and 9 per cent were cancelled due to security or logistical challenges.³⁴ Access to northern Gaza, including Gaza City, Beit Lahia, Beit Hanoun and much of Jabaliya, was largely blocked, while humanitarian movements south of Wadi Gaza remained severely constrained by insecurity, limited facilitation and organized looting, fuelled by widespread desperation.

32. In Gaza, the breakdown of public order, exacerbated by the collapse of law enforcement structures and the scarcity of goods, has led to a surge in the looting of aid trucks, particularly in the second half of 2024, posing risks to aid convoys and staff and impeding Palestinians' access to life-saving assistance. Cash liquidity shortages following the collapse of the formal economy in Gaza and widespread damage to banking infrastructure have further undermined aid delivery.

33. The situation has significantly worsened since 2 March, when the Government of Israel blocked the entry of all humanitarian aid and commercial supplies into the Gaza Strip, the longest ban since the start of the war in October 2023. This has resulted in critical shortages of food, medicine, shelter materials, and clean water.

34. The obstruction of humanitarian assistance, coupled with the denial of access to essential services for civilians, raises serious concerns regarding the compliance of Israel with its obligations under international law. As the occupying Power, Israel is obligated to ensure the provision of food and medical supplies to the civilian population and to facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief.

³² OHCHR monitoring.

³³ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Humanitarian situation update No. 277: Gaza Strip", 4 April 2025.

³⁴ UNRWA, "UNRWA situation report No. 154 on the situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem", 12 January 2025.

The denial or undue restriction of such assistance may constitute a violation of international law and may amount to collective punishment.

35. The closure and blockade of Gaza, imposed since 2007 and intensified since 7 October 2023, may amount to collective punishment, which is prohibited under international law.

West Bank movement restrictions

36. The movement of Palestinians within the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is restricted through a complex system of over 800 checkpoints, permits, military roadblocks, settlements, bypass roads, and dual legal regimes, coupled with the 712 km-long barrier, which remains the single largest obstacle in the West Bank,³⁵ effectively fragmenting the territory, severing communities from farmland, schools and hospitals, rendering Palestinian livelihoods unsustainable and undermining the social and economic rights of Palestinians in the West Bank.³⁶

Destruction and deprivation of access to natural resources

37. The Palestinian people continue to face systematic denial of access to and control of natural resources due to Israeli policies and practices, including restrictions on access to agricultural land, water resources and fishing zones. These measures have had a profound impact on livelihoods, particularly for farmers, herders and fisherfolk, leading to reduced agricultural productivity, loss of income and heightened food insecurity.

38. In Gaza, environmental governance was already fragile and severely constrained before the hostilities began in October 2023, owing to long-standing restrictions, limited institutional capacity and chronic underfunding. Since October 2023, the situation has deteriorated dramatically, with the destruction of critical infrastructure – including waste management facilities, wastewater treatment plants and environmental monitoring systems – further undermining environmental governance and oversight.³⁷

39. Israeli military operations involving the use of heavy military equipment, sustained and intense bombardment and large-scale ground operations have resulted in significant environmental degradation across Gaza, including widespread soil compaction, cratering and erosion. An estimated 343 ha (34 per cent of the 995-ha coastal zone of Gaza) have been destroyed, undermining critical coastal ecosystems and increasing vulnerability to coastal erosion and sea water intrusion.³⁸

40. The collapse of wastewater treatment facilities in Gaza has had devastating environmental and public health consequences. In the absence of functional treatment systems, large amounts of untreated wastewater are being discharged daily into the environment, contaminating the Mediterranean Sea, damaging marine ecosystems and polluting already scarce water resources, particularly the coastal aquifer, the primary source of drinking water for the population of Gaza.³⁹ In 2024, an estimated 60,000 m³ of wastewater and sewage per day were being discharged into the environment.⁴⁰ The collapse of sewage systems has also resulted in the flooding of

³⁵ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “West Bank: movement and access update”, May 2025.

³⁶ Ibid.; and [A/79/347](#), paras. 47–49.

³⁷ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Environmental Impact of the Conflict in Gaza: Preliminary Assessment of Environmental Impacts* (Nairobi, 2024); and UNEP input.

³⁸ UNEP input.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ UNEP, *Environmental Impact of the Conflict in Gaza* (Nairobi, 2024)

agricultural lands with untreated effluent, leading to soil salinization. The severe closures and restrictions on and denial of humanitarian aid after 7 October 2023, and particularly since 2 March 2025, as well as the repeated targeting of critical infrastructure, have severely impeded repairs and maintenance, leaving the environmental management systems of Gaza unable to respond to the escalating crisis.

41. An estimated 500,000 tonnes of solid waste have accumulated across official dumping sites and informal, unregulated dumpsites throughout Gaza. These sites have become breeding grounds for disease vectors, including mosquitoes, flies and rodents, posing serious public health risks, particularly for vulnerable communities living nearby. Furthermore, the destruction of the two main medical waste treatment facilities in Gaza has severely disrupted the safe management of hazardous medical waste, creating grave risks of disease transmission, environmental contamination and public health hazards.⁴¹

42. The destruction of the industrial and energy infrastructure in Gaza has resulted in severe environmental contamination, with serious public health and ecological risks. The destruction of 67 megawatts of solar photovoltaic systems has released an estimated 1,675 kg of lead and other toxins into the environment,⁴² while the destruction of 1,980 transformers and 125 substations has raised the threat of toxic polychlorinated biphenyls leaking into the soil and water.⁴³ Furthermore, damage to generators, fuel storage facilities and gas stations has caused major fuel spills, polluting the soil and posing a long-term threat to groundwater resources.

43. The extensive use of explosives during military operations has introduced a range of toxic contaminants, including trinitrotoluene, cyclotrimethylenetrinitramine and heavy metals, into the environment, posing serious risks to human health and ecosystems.⁴⁴

44. The breakdown of waste management and energy systems has led to increased burning of solid waste, which results in the emission of hazardous pollutants such as dioxins and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. Exposure to such pollutants heightens the risk of respiratory illnesses and cardiovascular diseases, and could have a long-term health impact, particularly among vulnerable populations.⁴⁵

45. The destruction of civilian infrastructure in Gaza has generated an unprecedented quantity of debris. To date, an estimated 170,812 structures have been destroyed (70 per cent of civilian infrastructure in Gaza), resulting in 53.45 million tonnes of debris as at the end of the reporting period. The density of debris has reached critical levels, exceeding 383 kg per square metre, effectively blanketing large urban areas and turning entire neighbourhoods into inaccessible zones.⁴⁶

46. The sheer scale of debris is obstructing humanitarian relief and the safe return of displaced residents. The rubble poses serious safety risks, with explosive ordnance buried within the debris, endangering lives. Hazardous materials, including asbestos

⁴¹ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), “Impact of the war on solid waste management in Gaza”, UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People Gaza Insight Series, October 2024.

⁴² UNEP, *Environmental Impact of the Conflict in Gaza* (Nairobi, 2024).

⁴³ UNEP input.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ UNEP, “Gaza strip: preliminary debris quantification – damage assessment analysis, 4 April 2025”, May 2025.

and chemical residues, have further compounded the environmental and health crisis.⁴⁷

47. As at 31 December 2024, an estimated 75 per cent of agricultural land in Gaza (11,293 ha) had been damaged or destroyed as a result of military operations, including 7,043 ha (79.5 per cent) of orchards and trees, 2,187 ha (73.1 per cent) of cropland, and 2,063 ha (64.3 per cent) of vegetable fields.⁴⁸ Over half of all greenhouses were affected, and 67 per cent of water wells were damaged, with Gaza governorate particularly hard hit. Livestock losses were catastrophic, reaching 96 per cent, with only 1 per cent of the poultry stock surviving. The fishing sector is on the brink of collapse under the combined effects of naval restrictions, infrastructure destruction and loss of fishing equipment and vessels, threatening food security and livelihoods across the territory.⁴⁹

48. In June 2024, Israeli authorities declared over 12.7 km² of land in the Jordan Valley as State land, bringing the total land seized in the West Bank in 2024 to 23.7 km².⁵⁰

Social and economic conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

49. The war in Gaza, along with the prolonged Israeli occupation, severe restrictions and closures, has deeply affected the Palestinian economy. Economic growth in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had already been severely hindered by Israeli policies, movement and access restrictions, and territorial fragmentation.

50. The human development index for the Occupied Palestinian Territory experienced a sharp decline, falling from 0.716 in 2022 to 0.674 in 2023. Estimates by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the United Nations Development Programme suggest that by the end of 2024, the human development index may decline further, to 0.643 – a level not seen in the Occupied Palestinian Territory since human development index measurements began in 2004. It is estimated that the Gaza Strip may have suffered the greatest decline, with its human development index dropping to 0.408. This deterioration is equivalent to 69 years of lost progress. The human development index of the West Bank is also expected to decline, to 0.676, marking a reversal of 16 years of development.⁵¹ Since October 2023, 55 per cent of the population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has been pushed into multidimensional poverty. In Gaza, poverty rates have surged to nearly 100 per cent, up from 64 per cent before the onset of hostilities.

Economic conditions

51. The Palestinian economy experienced a sharp contraction in 2024 and is estimated to have incurred losses exceeding \$5 billion in 2024, representing a 28 per cent decline in gross domestic product (GDP) across the West Bank and Gaza

⁴⁷ UNEP input.

⁴⁸ FAO and UNITAR, “Damage to cropland categories to the conflict in the Gaza Strip as of 31st of December 2024”, January 2025.

⁴⁹ FAO, “Gaza: immediate action must combine emergency relief with the restoration of local food production”, 28 January 2025.

⁵⁰ Peace Now, “The Government declares 12,000 dunams in the Jordan Valley as State lands”, 3 July 2024.

⁵¹ The human development index measure a country’s overall achievements in three basic dimensions of human development: health (measured by life expectancy), knowledge (measured by schooling), and standard of living (measured by gross national income per capita). The human development index assigns countries to one of four categories based on their value: very high: index of 0.800 or more; high: index between 0.700 and 0.799; medium: index between 0.550 and 0.699; low: index below 0.55. See <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI>.

compared with 2023. The economy of Gaza contracted by 86 per cent, with minimal economic activity beyond public services, while the economy of the West Bank contracted by 23 per cent. The collapse of the Gazan economy is particularly stark. Despite 40 per cent of the Palestinian population residing there, the contribution of Gaza to the national GDP fell to just 3 per cent in 2024, down from 20 per cent previously.

52. Unemployment across the Occupied Palestinian Territory reached record highs, rising to an average of 51 per cent (35 per cent in the West Bank and 80 per cent in Gaza). The labour force participation rate in the West Bank decreased from 45.2 per cent in 2023 to 43.5 per cent in 2024 due to job losses in Israel and dwindling local opportunities. Over 360,000 jobs were lost across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, with over 150,000 Palestinian workers losing their jobs in Israel and in settlements, which were historically a critical source of income for West Bank households.⁵²

53. According to the interim rapid damage and needs assessment, as at October 2024, the total physical infrastructure damage in Gaza was estimated at \$29.9 billion, with an additional \$19.1 billion in economic and social losses, bringing the total estimated impact to \$49 billion, equivalent to 1.8 times the combined annual GDP of the West Bank and Gaza. The housing sector suffered the most, with \$15.8 billion in damages, accounting for 53 per cent of total physical infrastructure damage, followed by trade and industry (\$5.9 billion, 20 per cent), transport (\$2.5 billion, 8 per cent), and water and sanitation (\$1.53 billion, 5 per cent).⁵³

54. Severe shortages of goods entering Gaza have led to a 238 per cent increase in consumer prices. The resulting loss in purchasing power has been profound in Gaza, which saw a 70 per cent drop, while the West Bank saw a 3 per cent drop in purchasing power. Overall, Palestinian consumers have experienced a 33 per cent decline in purchasing power in 2024.⁵⁴

55. The Palestinian Authority faces a financing gap of almost \$2.0 billion, or nearly 20 per cent of GDP, driven primarily by the continued monthly deductions Israel makes from the clearance revenue that it collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority. The deductions are estimated to total \$1.97 billion since 2019, including more than \$525 million in deductions since October 2023. These deductions, combined with declining international aid, have severely constrained the Palestinian Authority's fiscal space and its ability to pay public sector employee salaries, maintain core functions and deliver essential services. Public salaries are being paid at 60–70 per cent of pre-October 2023 levels, and the Palestinian Authority has resorted to costly domestic borrowing and the accumulation of arrears to private sector suppliers and pension funds.⁵⁵

56. As a result, the Palestinian Authority's debt to local banks has increased by 25 per cent since October 2023, and is now estimated to be over \$4 billion, further exposing the banking sector to the Authority's increasingly fragile fiscal position. Despite some donor assistance, international aid currently covers less than 40 per cent

⁵² World Bank, European Union and United Nations, *Gaza and West Bank Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment* (February 2025); and Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "Labour Force Participation Survey November–December 2024", April 2025.

⁵³ World Bank, European Union and United Nations, *Gaza and West Bank Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment* (February 2025).

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ UNCTAD input; and World Bank, *Economic Monitoring Report: Impacts of the Conflict in the Middle East on the Palestinian Economy* (2024).

of the Palestinian Authority's financing gap, leaving it unable to invest meaningfully in recovery, economic stabilization or development.⁵⁶

57. The prolonged crisis is eroding human capital across the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Widespread displacement, psychological trauma and prolonged disruptions to education and livelihoods are expected to have lasting consequences for productivity, labour force participation, and long-term growth.⁵⁷

Food security

58. Food insecurity in Gaza has reached catastrophic and unprecedented levels. In January, approximately 1.84 million people were facing acute food insecurity, including famine in some areas, and starvation, malnutrition and excess mortality due to malnutrition and disease were rapidly increasing in northern Gaza.⁵⁸

59. About 2.1 million people across the Gaza Strip are projected to experience high levels of acute food insecurity, classified as Integrated Food Security Phase Classification phase 3 or above (crisis or worse), between May and September 2025, including nearly 469,500 people who will likely experience catastrophic food insecurity (phase 5).⁵⁹

60. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2024, 657,008 children aged 6–59 months were screened for malnutrition. Of those screened, 39,341 (6.3 per cent) were admitted to the community-based management of acute malnutrition programme for treatment, including 7,675 children (1.2 per cent) with severe acute malnutrition and 31,666 children (4.8 per cent) with moderate acute malnutrition. In 2024, a total of 456 patients with severe acute malnutrition complications were admitted to stabilization centres. Since the restrictions and denials of humanitarian aid further intensified on 2 March, at least 57 children are reported to have died from the effects of malnutrition.⁶⁰

61. Between September 2024 and August 2025, it is estimated that 16,500 pregnant and breastfeeding women and 71,000 children will be in need of treatment for acute malnutrition.⁶¹ Malnutrition among pregnant women led to a 10 per cent preterm birth rate and 50 per cent prevalence of anaemia, leading to increased neonatal mortality and related lifelong health complications for newborns.⁶²

62. Local food production, a critical pillar of the resilience of Gaza, has collapsed. The destruction of farmland, severe water shortages, and restrictions on fuel and agricultural inputs have rendered the majority of agricultural activities impossible.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

63. Since October 2023, Israeli authorities have restricted pipeline flows, destroyed solar panels powering desalination facilities, and blocked fuel imports essential for water and wastewater systems, leading to the shutdown of 85 per cent of pumping

⁵⁶ UNCTAD, "Developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory", 23 July 2024.

⁵⁷ World Bank, European Union and United Nations, *Gaza and West Bank Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment* (February 2025).

⁵⁸ FAO input.

⁵⁹ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, "Gaza strip: IPC acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition special snapshot, April–September 2025", 12 May 2025.

⁶⁰ World Health Organization (WHO), "OPT emergency situation update, No. 53: 7 Oct 2023–8 Jan 2025", 5 February 2025.

⁶¹ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, "Gaza strip: IPC acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition special snapshot, April–September 2025", 12 May 2025.

⁶² United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) input.

stations and wastewater treatment facilities in Gaza, depriving 2.2 million people of access to safe water.⁶³

64. Satellite imagery shows that 89 per cent of water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure in Gaza has been either damaged or destroyed. This includes 25 municipal wells that supplied 70 per cent of northern Gaza's water, and six wastewater treatment plants, one of which was completely destroyed by airstrikes. The Gaza power plant, supplying 60 per cent of electricity used for water operations, has been severely damaged.⁶⁴

65. Daily water availability in Gaza has fallen to an average of 3–5 litres per person per day, well below the World Health Organization (WHO) emergency survival threshold of 15 litres per person per day. WHO testing found that 78 per cent of water samples failed to meet quality standards, significantly increasing the risk of waterborne disease outbreaks.⁶⁵

66. The collapse of sanitation systems has led to a 300 per cent surge in cases of acute watery diarrhoea, as well as increases in hepatitis A. There has also been an increase in skin infections, particularly among children under five, who account for 67 per cent of reported cases.⁶⁶ The destruction of medical waste systems and cold chain facilities has further exacerbated the risk of infectious disease spread.⁶⁷

67. Polio has reemerged in Gaza, over 20 years after it was eradicated there. Despite WHO-coordinated polio vaccination rounds in September 2024, October/November 2024 and February 2025, vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 continues to be detected in environmental samples.⁶⁸ Further immunization rounds have been delayed due to restrictions and denial of humanitarian aid and ongoing hostilities.⁶⁹

68. In the West Bank, in particular in the Jenin, Tulkarm and Nur Shams camps, Israeli military operations have caused widespread destruction to civilian infrastructure, including water and sewage systems. This has created critical health hazards, particularly due to wastewater contamination of water sources, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases.⁷⁰

69. UNRWA solid waste management operations in the West Bank have also been heavily affected by the heightened access restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities, undermining basic sanitation in several communities.⁷¹

Health

70. The ongoing hostilities, the systematic dismantling of the Gazan health system, and Israeli restrictions on the entry and distribution of medical supplies have caused a sharp deterioration in health outcomes. Rising morbidity and mortality are driven by traumatic injuries, unmanaged non-communicable diseases, infectious diseases

⁶³ World Bank, European Union and United Nations, *Gaza and West Bank Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment* (February 2025).

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ WHO, "Hostilities in the occupied Palestinian territory: Public Health Situation Analysis", 26 February 2025.

⁶⁶ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) input.

⁶⁷ WHO input.

⁶⁸ WHO, "Hostilities in the occupied Palestinian territory: Public Health Situation Analysis", 26 February 2025.

⁶⁹ WHO input.

⁷⁰ UNRWA input.

⁷¹ Ibid.

and widespread malnutrition. Reproductive health has been severely affected, with over 50,000 pregnant women deprived of prenatal care.⁷²

71. Gaza faces a 40 per cent shortage of essential medicines. Over 90 per cent of its health facilities have been damaged or destroyed, including 33 of its 36 hospitals, only 21 of which remain partially operational, functioning at just 44 per cent of their pre-crisis capacity.⁷³ Of the 22 health centres run by UNRWA, 2 have been demolished and 4 severely damaged, and only 4 remain operational. Four temporary centres and 54 medical points have been established to help meet rising needs.⁷⁴

72. Critical health services have been crippled by fuel shortages, disrupting critical neonatal care, dialysis, surgical units and ambulance operations. In southern Gaza, only four oxygen stations are available. In northern Gaza, a single oxygen station serves seven hospitals, compared with 20 oxygen stations prior to the escalation of hostilities, endangering patients in intensive care.⁷⁵

73. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 March 2025, 822 attacks on healthcare⁷⁶ were documented in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, through the WHO Surveillance System for Attacks on Healthcare. In Gaza, 361 incidents resulted in 283 fatalities and 587 injuries, damaged 33 of 36 hospitals, and affected 92 ambulances. In the West Bank, 461 attacks caused 22 deaths and 88 injuries, damaged 35 health facilities, and affected 315 ambulances. At least 75 per cent of these attacks obstructed healthcare access, and 27 per cent of force-related incidents involved weapons.⁷⁷ Since October 2023, over 850 health workers and medical professionals have been killed in Gaza, exacerbating the collapse of its healthcare system. The loss of qualified personnel has significantly hindered the ability to deliver life-saving care.⁷⁸

74. The destruction of Gaza's physical rehabilitation infrastructure has left over 4,500 amputees, including 810 children, without access to prosthetics or rehabilitation services. Many patients, including children with spinal injuries, are treated on hospital floors due to severe bed shortages.⁷⁹

75. The mental health crisis across Gaza and the West Bank has reached alarming levels. Nearly all of Gaza's 1.2 million children require mental health and psychosocial support, with many exhibiting signs of acute psychological trauma, such as nightmares, withdrawal and aggression.⁸⁰ Over 17,000 children have been separated from their families.⁸¹ The destruction of the only psychiatric hospital in Gaza has left patients with chronic conditions without care.

⁷² UNFPA, "As famine looms in Gaza, pregnant women and newborns face life-threatening health risks", 19 May 2025.

⁷³ World Bank, European Union and United Nations, *Gaza and West Bank Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment* (February 2025); and WHO, "OPT emergency situation update, No. 57: 7 Oct–14 Mar 2025", 14 March 2025.

⁷⁴ UNRWA input.

⁷⁵ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Humanitarian situation update No. 265: Gaza, 18 February 2025.

⁷⁶ WHO defines an attack on healthcare as "any act of verbal or physical violence, obstruction, or threat of violence that interferes with the availability, access, and delivery of curative and/or preventive health services during emergencies".

⁷⁷ WHO input.

⁷⁸ OHCHR, "UN expert shocked by death of another Palestinian doctor in Israeli detention", 24 September 2024.

⁷⁹ WHO input.

⁸⁰ UNICEF, "Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster: Education overview in 2024 – the state of education in Gaza and the West Bank", February 2025.

⁸¹ World Bank, European Union and United Nations, *Gaza and West Bank Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment* (February 2025); and WHO, "OPT emergency situation update, No. 57: 7 Oct–14 Mar 2025", 14 March 2025.

76. Gaza has the highest per capita rate of child amputees globally.⁸² An assessment in 2024 found that severe limb injuries are the leading factor driving the demand for rehabilitation services. Since October 2023, an estimated 13,000–17,000 major extremity injuries have been reported, along with 3,000–4,000 amputations and over 2,000 serious spinal cord and brain injuries, contributing to a surge in long-term physical and psychological care needs.⁸³

77. Life expectancy in the Gaza Strip has been nearly cut in half, declining by 46.3 per cent since October 2023, according to new estimates. Life expectancy dropped from a pre-war average of 75.5 years to 40.5 years for the period between October 2023 and September 2024.⁸⁴

78. In the West Bank, movement and access restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities continue to severely limit access to primary and emergency healthcare services. Military operations in 2024 damaged key roads, delayed ambulances and restricted care for patients with chronic diseases and women in labour.⁸⁵

Education

79. The hostilities have cut access to education for the entire population of Gaza, depriving all children and young people of formal schooling and the protective environment it provides. Repeated violence, mass displacement and the destruction of infrastructure have left an estimated 745,000 children, young people and higher education students outside the formal education system. This includes over 658,000 school-aged children who have lost an entire academic year and 39,000 students unable to take critical examinations, in particular the tawjihi.⁸⁶

80. Satellite imagery from December 2024 shows that 95.2 per cent of Gazan schools (537 of 564) have been damaged or destroyed, with 88 per cent (496 schools) requiring complete reconstruction.⁸⁷

81. As of December 2024, 12,035 students and 492 education personnel had been killed, with an additional 19,379 students and 2,603 education personnel injured. Many of those injured have life-altering disabilities.⁸⁸ Schools that remain structurally viable have been converted into overcrowded shelters. They are unsafe and unsuitable for learning. Israeli military evacuation orders, particularly in northern Gaza, have repeatedly disrupted attempts to resume learning.⁸⁹

82. Severe restrictions on importing supplies, including educational supplies, have crippled efforts to establish temporary learning spaces. As of early 2025, only 405 such spaces were operational, serving approximately 137,000 children, less than a quarter of Gaza's school-aged population. The presence of unexploded ordnance

⁸² See www.unicefusa.org/stories/unicef-delivers-wheelchairs-gazas-children.

⁸³ WHO, "Estimating trauma rehabilitation needs in Gaza using injury data from emergency medical teams", 30 July 2024.

⁸⁴ Michel Guillot and others, "Life expectancy losses in the Gaza Strip during the period October 2023 to September 2024", *The Lancet*, vol. 405, No. 10477 (February 2025).

⁸⁵ WHO and UNFPA inputs.

⁸⁶ World Bank, European Union and United Nations, *Gaza and West Bank Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment* (February 2025); and UNICEF, "Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster: Education overview in 2024 – the state of education in Gaza and the West Bank", February 2025.

⁸⁷ UNICEF, "Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster: Education overview in 2024 – the state of education in Gaza and the West Bank", February 2025.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Humanitarian situation update No. 265"; and UNICEF, "Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster: Education overview in 2024 – the state of education in Gaza and the West Bank", February 2025.

continues to obstruct the safe expansion of educational sites.⁹⁰ Without urgent and sustained interventions, Gaza risks losing an entire generation to illiteracy, psychosocial trauma and deepening poverty.⁹¹

83. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, education for some 806,300 school-aged children remains disrupted due to escalating violence, mobility restrictions and the impact of ongoing military operations. Children in hotspot areas have experienced increasing school closures and interruptions.⁹² As of the end of January 2025, students in the northern West Bank had already lost 10 per cent of learning days since the start of the academic year due to insecurity and access constraints.⁹³

84. Economic hardship has further undermined educational access in the West Bank. An estimated 40 per cent of families are unable to afford schooling costs, pushing many older children, especially boys, into informal labour markets. Girls and young women are twice as likely to drop out after the age of 12, particularly in rural areas where getting to school takes a long time or is unsafe or unaffordable.⁹⁴

85. Teachers across the West Bank are also affected. Low wages, delayed public sector salary payments, infrastructure damage and persistently high stress levels have pushed many to seek secondary employment or to leave the teaching profession, exacerbating an already fragile education system.⁹⁵

86. On 18 February, Israeli forces and municipality personnel forcefully entered the UNRWA Kalandia Training Centre in East Jerusalem, fired tear gas and sound bombs in its vicinity, and ordered its immediate evacuation, affecting at least 350 students and 30 staff members. Israeli police officers also went to several UNRWA schools in occupied East Jerusalem and ordered their closure.⁹⁶

Impact of the occupation on women and girls from a gender perspective

87. The collapse of social protection systems, amid widespread displacement, destruction of homes and health facilities, and lack of privacy and essential services, has left Palestinian women and girls in Gaza acutely vulnerable to heightened risks of gender-based violence, exploitation and abuse.

88. Women and children constitute the majority of the fatalities in Gaza. Since October 2023, over 8,300 women have been killed.⁹⁷ At the height of the hostilities, two mothers were killed every hour in Gaza.⁹⁸ Pregnant women face life-threatening conditions, with deliveries occurring daily in unsafe, unhygienic environments, and

⁹⁰ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Humanitarian situation update No. 265”.

⁹¹ UNICEF, “Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster: Education overview in 2024 – the state of education in Gaza and the West Bank”, February 2025.

⁹² UNICEF, “Humanitarian situation report No. 34”, 30 January 2025.

⁹³ UNRWA input.

⁹⁴ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Humanitarian situation update No. 266: West Bank”, 20 February 2025.

⁹⁵ UNICEF, “Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster: Education overview in 2024 – the state of education in Gaza and the West Bank”, February 2025.

⁹⁶ Philippe Lazzarini, “Children and young people in East Jerusalem denied of their right to education in UNRWA schools”, UNRWA, 18 February 2025.

⁹⁷ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Reported impact snapshot: Gaza Strip”, 22 April 2025.

⁹⁸ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), “Press release: two mothers are killed in Gaza every hour as fighting exceeds 100 days”, 19 January 2024.

without adequate care, contributing to rising rates of miscarriage, stillbirths, maternal mortality and neonatal complications.⁹⁹

89. Across Gaza, an estimated 500,000 women of reproductive age and 235,000 adolescent girls face catastrophic shortages of maternal healthcare, with 50,000 expected deliveries in 2025. The destruction of healthcare facilities and lack of access to hygiene supplies, nutrition, prenatal vitamins, antibiotics and anaesthesia have led to a 300 per cent increase in miscarriages since 2023.¹⁰⁰

90. In northern Gaza, women are giving birth in makeshift tents and damaged buildings, often with unsterilized tools. Postpartum infections have surged by 400 per cent, and neonatal mortality has doubled due to the unavailability of incubators and life-saving medicine. Over 80 per cent of pregnant women exhibit signs of acute psychological distress and 63 per cent report suicidal ideation, amid ongoing bombardment, repeated displacement and the absence of psychosocial care.¹⁰¹

91. The socioeconomic impact on women has been equally devastating. As of early 2025, over 12,000 Palestinian women have been widowed by the conflict, with many now the sole providers for their families.¹⁰² These women navigate a collapsed economy and public services, often resorting to informal and exploitative work to provide for their families. Coping mechanisms include bartering goods, collecting waste and relying on humanitarian aid.

92. In the West Bank, 266 Palestinian women were reportedly detained by the Israeli authorities in 2024, bringing the total number of women detained since October 2023 to 450, with 18 still being detained as of February 2025, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

93. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel has found sexual and reproductive healthcare facilities have been systematically destroyed across Gaza, including maternity hospitals and maternity wards and Gaza's main in vitro fertilization clinic.¹⁰³ In addition, the Commission found that sexual, reproductive and other forms of gender-based violence constitute a major element in the ill-treatment of Palestinians and, in the wider context, the unlawful occupation and the oppression of Palestinians as a group. The Commission also reported that a prevailing culture of impunity within the Israeli security forces allows soldiers to act without fear of accountability, implicitly encouraged by both civilian and military leadership.¹⁰⁴

III. Occupied Syrian Golan

94. The Secretary-General continues to reaffirm the validity of Security Council resolution [497 \(1981\)](#), in which the Council decided that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights was null and void and without international legal effect.

95. Settlement expansion in the occupied Syrian Golan has continued with the support of the Government of Israel. Since 1967, the Israeli occupation has displaced an estimated 140,000 Syrians and destroyed 341 villages. Of the total area of the occupied Syrian Golan of 1,860 km², approximately 1,260 km² are under Israeli

⁹⁹ UNFPA input.

¹⁰⁰ See [A/HRC/58/CRP.6](#).

¹⁰¹ UNFPA input.

¹⁰² See [A/HRC/58/CRP.6](#).

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

occupation.¹⁰⁵ As of early 2025, 29,000 Israeli settlers reside in 35 illegal settlements, controlling an estimated 95 per cent of the occupied land. Only five Syrian villages remain, home to 28,000 residents, who continue to face restrictions on movement, curfews, land confiscation, and limitations on housing and infrastructure development.

96. The settler population has grown steadily in recent years. In 2021, the Israeli authorities announced plans to double the number of settlers in the occupied Syrian Golan by 2027. In December 2024, the Government of Israel approved an additional development package of \$11.0 million to settle new residents in the occupied Syrian Golan.¹⁰⁶ By 2023, the population in the occupied Syrian Golan totalled 55,100, comprising 25,800 Israeli settlers and 27,200 Syrians. This reflects an increase of 7.5 per cent in the settler population and of 1.1 per cent in the Syrian population compared with 2022 figures.

97. Israeli settlement expansion in the occupied Syrian Golan has not been limited to residential construction. In 2024, the Government of Israel approved and further advanced commercial infrastructure projects, including the construction of 23 wind turbines near the villages of Majdal Shams and Masadeh. The wind turbine site is located in extensive agricultural land belonging to Syrian residents from the surrounding villages, particularly affecting members of the Druze community, who rely on the land as their primary source of income. The project threatens to further restrict the ability of the Syrian population to sustain agricultural activity and expand their communities. Farmers face the compounded challenge of losing productive land while competing with heavily subsidized Israeli settlement agriculture. The General Assembly, in its resolution [79/91](#), condemned any activities involving the confiscation of land, the disruption of the livelihood of protected persons, the forced transfer of civilians and the annexation of land, whether de facto or through national legislation.

98. The security situation in the occupied Syrian Golan has worsened since October 2023, particularly since the collapse of the Government of Bashar al-Assad in December 2024. As at 18 February 2025, the Israel Defense Forces had established 10 military positions in the area of separation and occupied two houses in the area of limitation.¹⁰⁷ Since July 2024, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) has observed continued Israeli military activities along and in the vicinity of the ceasefire line. This includes the construction of counter-mobility obstacles.¹⁰⁸

IV. Conclusion

99. I once again strongly condemn the horrific attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups on 7 October 2023 and the continued holding of hostages in Gaza. Nothing can justify these acts of terror. I reiterate my call for all hostages to be released immediately and unconditionally. While in captivity, hostages must be treated humanely and allowed to receive visits and assistance from the International Committee of the Red Cross.

100. An unbearable level of suffering continued over the past year and continues to this day. An immediate permanent ceasefire in Gaza is long overdue. The

¹⁰⁵ Al-Marsad, “The Syrian Golan – the twice-forgotten occupation: the rights of Golan Syrians must be respected”, 2 February 2025.

¹⁰⁶ Lazar Berman, “Cabinet approves \$11 million plan to double population in the Golan Heights”, *The Times of Israel*, 16 December 2024.

¹⁰⁷ See [S/2025/154](#).

¹⁰⁸ United Nations, “UNDOF press statement”, 13 December 2024.

continued collective punishment of the Palestinian people is unjustifiable. The relentless bombardment of Gaza, the large number of civilian casualties, the blanket destruction of Palestinian neighbourhoods and the worsening humanitarian situation by the day are appalling. I unequivocally condemn the widespread killing and injury of civilians, including women and children, and the destruction of civilian infrastructure in Gaza.

101. **Civilians are in an endless death loop. The widespread devastation resulting from Israeli military operations, the deprivation and the blocking of humanitarian aid and commercial supplies are making living conditions untenable for the Palestinian population. I am deeply alarmed by the findings released in May that reveal that, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, the Gaza Strip is confronted with a critical risk of famine, with the entire population facing high levels of acute food insecurity, half a million people, or one in five, facing starvation, and the vast majority of children facing extreme food deprivation.**

102. **I call for rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access that fully respects the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality. Unimpeded humanitarian access must be guaranteed. Humanitarian aid is not negotiable. It must flow without impediment. Humanitarian personnel must be given the protection that they are accorded under international law. I mourn the United Nations staff killed in Gaza and strongly condemn the killing of all humanitarian personnel. The inviolability of United Nations premises and assets must be respected.**

103. **The conflict continues to be waged with little regard for international humanitarian law. The manner in which hostilities are conducted continues to leave me deeply alarmed at what may be violations of international humanitarian law by both parties to the conflict, including possible non-compliance with the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions. International humanitarian law applies to all parties to a conflict at all times. Israel, as the occupying Power, must comply with all its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law. The protection of civilians is paramount in any armed conflict. I reject the forced displacement of the Palestinian population from any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which would constitute a grave violation of international human rights and humanitarian law. This must be stopped.**

104. **The protracted military occupation of Palestinian territory and the Syrian Golan continues to have a detrimental effect on the living conditions of the Palestinian and Syrian populations, as well as on social and economic development in the occupied territories. Israel continues to employ policies and practices that may be contrary to relevant Security Council resolutions, international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Some of these practices may be discriminatory, while others may amount to the forcible transfer or collective punishment of protected persons, a grave breach of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and prohibited under international law. Adherence to international law is imperative, ensuring that no party enjoys impunity and securing justice and peace for all those living in the region, including Palestinians and Syrians living under occupation. I am deeply concerned by any long-term presence of Israeli security forces in the refugee camps in the West Bank, which would be contrary to the obligation of Israel to end its unlawful continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as affirmed by the International Court of Justice.**

105. The current trajectory in the Occupied Palestinian Territory not only threatens the viability of a two-State solution but also undermines the broader realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In Gaza, the near-total destruction of the economic base, social fabric and critical infrastructure has inflicted lasting intergenerational harm, plunging hundreds of thousands of families into poverty and acute deprivation. In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, restrictions on access to land and natural resources continue to obstruct economic activity and stifle sustainable development. The cumulative impact has reversed decades of human development gains. Even returning to the pre-war baseline – already characterized by chronic vulnerability – will require many decades of sustained effort and resources.

106. Palestinian women and girls face a systematic erosion of their rights to safety, education, healthcare and participation. Older persons and persons with disabilities confront severe and often insurmountable barriers to mobility, assistance and access to essential services. Across Gaza, extensive environmental damage has further jeopardized public health and long-term resilience. With the cost of recovery and reconstruction in Gaza estimated at \$53 billion over the next decade, the international community must provide a coordinated response that is rights-based and inclusive, and enables long-term recovery, stability and sustainable development.

107. Syrians in the Golan face systemic barriers to employment, land ownership, mobility, and access to public services, while economic disparities remain stark, affecting women and young people in particular. The expansion of settlements and infrastructure projects on Syrian-owned agricultural land has undermined local livelihoods and environmental sustainability.

108. UNRWA remains the backbone of all humanitarian response efforts in Gaza and is vital to the humanitarian response. National laws relating to UNRWA cannot alter the obligations of Israel under international law. I appeal to all Member States to guarantee the continuity of the Agency's life-saving work.

109. The occupation must end as rapidly as possible. The United Nations remains committed to supporting Palestinians and Israelis in ending the occupation and resolving the conflict in line with international law, relevant United Nations resolutions and bilateral agreements in pursuit of the vision of two States – Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, viable and sovereign Palestinian State, of which Gaza is an integral part – living side by side in peace and security, within secure and recognized borders, on the basis of the pre-1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States. The two-State solution is rapidly slipping away. This is a moment of reckoning that demands urgent, specific and irreversible steps towards the two-State solution.
