



Act now, decisively and without delay, to end the human suffering and uphold international law in the occupied Palestinian territory

On 7 October 2023, a large-scale, indiscriminate attack by Hamas resulted in the deaths of at least [1,124 people and injured over 4,800](#). More than 250 people were taken hostage. Thereafter, Israel launched a wide-ranging military operation in Gaza resulting in devastating consequences for civilians and civilian infrastructure. Consequently, the humanitarian situation in Gaza, and increasingly in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has reached an unprecedented level of devastation.

Humanity & Inclusion (HI) has borne witness to the widespread disregard for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in this conflict and has repeatedly called for meaningful urgent action for the protection of civilians and stopping the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA). Yet, as of today, the situation in the occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt) remains catastrophic, and the international response continues to fall dangerously short.

I. A man-made humanitarian catastrophe

Throughout the conflict, Israeli forces have continued to use excessive and unlawful force, resulting in mass civilian casualties and widespread injuries¹. Essential civilian infrastructure has been systematically destroyed, and large parts of the Gaza strip remain contaminated with unexploded ordnance. The widespread use of EWIPA has also caused daily forced displacements, creating a cycle of insecurity for the population. [Over 81% of Gaza Strip](#) is now within the Israeli-militarised zone, resulting in daily forced displacement of the population.

Humanitarian operations to address the needs, have been systematically obstructed. Aid operations have also been impeded by intensified military activity, the killing of aid workers, targeted attacks on humanitarian premises, and severe internal movement restrictions. Since March 2, Israel completely blocked the entry of any aid into Gaza.

¹ At the time of writing this statement, since October 7, 2023, at least 61,722 Palestinians have been killed, and 154,525 Palestinians injured in Gaza.



Although some aid has been allowed to enter in the recent weeks, this is a drop in the ocean of humanitarian needs that need to be addressed.

According to the [IPC Alert](#) released in July 2025, the worst-case scenario of Famine is already playing out in the Gaza Strip. Mounting evidence shows that widespread starvation, malnutrition, and disease are driving a rise in hunger-related deaths. Latest data indicates that Famine thresholds have been reached for food consumption in most of the Gaza Strip and for acute malnutrition in Gaza City.

II. Shrinking Humanitarian Space

While the humanitarian needs in Gaza continue to grow, the humanitarian space to address these needs is gradually shrinking. In February 2025, Israeli authorities presented an initiative to humanitarian organizations, including the UN, to restructure aid delivery in Gaza and place relief operations under full Israeli military control. Recently, this plan is as given effect through militarised food distribution sites of the so called, 'Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF)'.

Backed by the United States and Israel, these militarised food sites force starved and weakened civilians to trek for hours through dangerous terrain and active conflict zones, only to face a violent, chaotic race to reach fenced, militarized distribution sites with a single entry point. There, thousands are released into chaotic enclosures to fight for limited food supplies. These areas have become sites of repeated massacres in blatant disregard for international humanitarian law. At the same time, limiting food distribution to restricted collection points has effectively excluded persons with disabilities and those who are injured and unable to move easily through the destruction, rubble, and unexploded ordinance contamination, violating the principle of impartial needs-based humanitarian assistance.

As HI and other humanitarian organisations had warned, catastrophic scenes have unfolded since these sites began its operations, as starving Palestinians rush to the sites in search of food. The process is undignified, chaotic, and deadly; many Palestinians have been arbitrarily arrested or injured, and killed in and around these distribution points.

Additionally, on 9 March, the Israeli authorities issued new visa and registration rules for INGOs wishing to operate in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). These rules are based on vague and politicised criteria, and include vetting of international and Palestinian staff, among other measures. For example, under the new provisions, INGOs already registered may face de-registration, while new applicants may risk rejection if it is seen as promoting any delegitimizing campaign against Israel or even expressing support for accountability for Israeli violations of international law. Additional grounds for exclusion include public support for a boycott of Israel within the past seven years (by staff, a partner, board member, or founder) or failing to meet exhaustive reporting requirements.



It is important to note that any staff and/or aid recipient vetting requirements, in a context where aid workers and civilians are repeatedly under attack, presents serious legal, privacy, data protection and security concerns. At the same time, the dignity and physical integrity of the staff and the population receiving aid, would also be at risk.

These measures pose an alarming threat to humanitarian advocacy that restrict fact-based humanitarian assessments and reporting. They represent a concerning escalation in restrictions on the humanitarian, development and the civic space, setting a dangerous precedent for humanitarian operations globally.

III. Escalating Crisis in the West Bank

The protracted conflict and ongoing occupation in the oPt have created persistent violence, and widespread international law violations. While the conditions in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, deteriorated significantly following October 7, 2023, the situation has reached a critical point since the Gaza ceasefire in January 2025. According to [OCHA](#), Between 7 October 2023 and 16 July 2025, 968 Palestinians, among them at least 204 children, were killed in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Of those, 162 Palestinians, including at least 31 children, were killed since the beginning of this year alone.

At the same time, settler violence has sharply escalated, with attacks increasing significantly since October 2023. In early June 2025, Israeli media [reported](#) that the Israeli security cabinet had approved the establishment of 22 new settlements in the West Bank, which entails the retroactive legalization of existing settlement outposts and their establishment as new settlements. The Israeli government has since already retroactively legalized 12 out of the 22 settlement outposts. This brings the total number of settlements approved by the Israeli government since 7 October 2023 to 49, compared with an annual average of seven outposts in the nearly three decades prior, according to Peace Now. All these settlements are illegal under international law.

To add to the crises, Israeli authorities have expanded movement restrictions, including the deployment of hundreds of checkpoints, gates and the closure of key access routes. A rapid [survey](#) conducted by OCHA in January and February 2025 found that there are currently 849 movement obstacles that permanently or intermittently restrict the movement of 3.3 million Palestinians across the West Bank. These measures have severely limited Palestinians' freedom of movement and access to livelihoods. As a direct result, an estimated [148,000 commuters](#) from the West Bank have lost access to their jobs and livelihoods in Israel.

IV. Violations of International Law



The man-made humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank reflects repeated and grave violations of international law. The conflict has involved violations by Israel, Hamas, and other armed groups. As the occupying power in the oPt, Israel bears clear legal obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, that are being repeatedly violated.

1. Violations by Israel as the Occupying Power

As an occupying power in the oPt, Israel is bound by the Fourth Geneva Convention (IV GC), particularly in its obligations to protect the civilian population and ensure access to humanitarian relief. These include:

- Article 16, requiring the occupying power to protect the wounded, sick, infirm, and maternity cases from any kind of harm.
- Articles 18–23, setting out protections for medical units, hospitals, transports, and personnel, and establishing respect and protection for their humanitarian functions.
- Article 47, ensuring that protected persons do not lose rights guaranteed under the Convention because of occupation or annexation.
- Article 49, prohibiting the forcible transfer or deportation of protected persons from occupied territory.
- Article 55, requiring the occupying power to ensure the provision of food and medical supplies to the population.
- Article 56, requiring it to maintain medical and hospital services in the occupied territory.
- Article 59, requiring the occupying power to allow and facilitate relief schemes if the population is inadequately supplied.

The obstructed humanitarian access, constitutes a violation of the aforesaid articles under the IV GC. The widespread destruction of infrastructure, forced displacement, and prevention of access to lifesaving aid reflects not only a failure to meet these obligations, but may also amount to grave breaches under Article 147 of the IV GC, with some of these acts amounting to war crimes.

The obstruction of aid, coupled with conditions described by [OCHA](#) as “deprivation by design,” could amount to collective punishment prohibited under Article 33 of the IV GC.

2. Violations by Hamas and other Palestinian Armed Groups

During the conflict, Hamas and other Palestinian Armed Groups (PAG) engaged in the deliberate killing of Israeli civilians, indiscriminate rocket attacks on populated urban



areas, and the taking of [hostages](#), acts that are prohibited under international law and may amount to war crimes. Knowingly placing civilians near military targets to shield those targets can also amount to war crime. While it may not be possible to establish conclusively whether Hamas has indeed been acting with such specific intent, there are serious grounds for concern that it has been doing so. As parties to the conflict, Hamas and PAG are also bound by Article 34 of the IV GC, which explicitly prohibits hostage-taking.

3. Non-Compliance with Provisional Measures issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ)

On 26 January 2024, the ICJ issued provisional measures in the case of *South Africa v. Israel*. In its decision, the Court stated that "at least some of the acts and omissions alleged by South Africa that have been committed by Israel in Gaza appear to be capable of falling within the provisions of the [Genocide] Convention". The Court further stated that Israel must take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Since then, several international organizations² have supported this finding and published reports affirming the qualification of genocide.

While HI does not have the mandate to establish the specific intent required to legally qualify the situation as genocide, there is no doubt that HI's employees in Gaza have witnessed, and have themselves been subjected to continued violence, and forced displacement; that humanitarian aid has been systematically and continuously obstructed; and that Palestinians are enduring conditions of life causing great suffering and serious injury to mental and physical health. Israel's failure to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance represents a continued violation of the ICJ Provisional Measures.

In its Orders of 26 January 2024 and subsequent additional provisional measures of 28 March 2024, the Court also expressed its grave concern over the fate of the hostages abducted during the attack in Israel on 7 October 2023 and held since then by Hamas and other armed groups and called for their immediate and unconditional release. Through the non-release of hostages, Hamas and other armed groups, have continued to violate the ICJ provisional Measures.

² Forensic Architecture, [A Cartography Of Genocide: Israel's Conduct In Gaza Since October 2023 \(October 2024\)](#)

Amnesty International, ['You Feel Like You Are Subhuman': Israel's Genocide Against Palestinians in Gaza \(December 2024\)](#)

Human Right Watch, [Extermination and Acts of Genocide \(December 2024\)](#)

Medecins sans Frontiers, [Gaza: Life in a Death Trap \(December 2024\)](#)



4. Breach of ICJ Advisory Opinion (ICJ AO)

In July 2024, the ICJ AO concluded that Israel is obligated to end its unlawful presence in the oPt as soon as possible, including the withdrawal of all military forces from the oPt, its airspace, and maritime space. The Court further stated that Israel must immediately cease all new settlement activities and evacuate all settlers from the oPt. The ICJ also confirmed that Israel's policies in the oPt violate the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which prohibits racial segregation and apartheid, and reaffirmed the Palestinian right to self-determination.

Following the ICJ AO, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution *inter-alia* recommending that Israel ends its unlawful presence in the oPt “no later than 12 months from the adoption of the present resolution” and urged third states not to recognize as legal, the situation arising from the unlawful presence of Israel in the oPt and not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by the continued presence of the State of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Over six months have passed since the UNGA resolution and there has been no compliance by Israel. Instead, Israeli government has now unveiled renewed plans for expanded military operations including plans to annex territory and forcibly displace Palestinians in Gaza, violating international law.

In the West Bank, unlawful and excessive use of force, and settler violence by Israel has led to increased killings, large-scale forcible transfers, and severe restrictions on movement. People are now unable to move freely between cities, villages and refugee camps, and humanitarian access too is thus restricted. There have also been cases of mass arbitrary arrests.

As the occupying power, Israel remains bound by its obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Actions that obstruct the provision of basic services and humanitarian assistance to the civilian population not only cause widespread loss of life and suffering but are also in breach of the ICJ AO and the corresponding UNGA resolution.

V. Recommendations

To Israel:

- Agree to and uphold an immediate and permanent ceasefire to save and protect civilian life.
- As the occupying power, allow the unhindered passage into Gaza of humanitarian aid and other life-saving supplies, including food, water, medicine, fuel, electricity and other necessities; immediately open all available aid routes and access points, and urgently and significantly increase the amount of aid able to move through all of Gaza's crossings and to all areas of the Gaza Strip.



- Discontinue any aid militarisation schemes that dismantle the already existing system and that do not fully respect and adhere to humanitarian principles and international law.
- Enable the urgent reconstruction, including by allowing all required construction materials and equipment and ensuring the clearance and disposal of debris and waste materials, including the safe removal of mines and unexploded ordnance.
- End the unlawful occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, in line with the ICJ AO of 19 July 2024.
- Allow for safe, unimpeded access to humanitarian actors in all areas, and humanitarian operations must be immediate and sustained.
- Immediately cease attacks on humanitarian workers and civilian infrastructure, in particular, health facilities, and ensure, through guarantees and appropriate monitoring, that humanitarian workers are not subject to arrest or detention for performing humanitarian services;
- More generally, respect and implement all applicable rules of international humanitarian law, particularly those aimed at the protection of the civilian population, including the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precautions in attack, and the obligation to take all feasible precautions against the effects of attacks.

To Hamas and other Palestinian Armed Groups:

- Agree to and uphold an immediate, sustained ceasefire to save and protect civilian life.
- Immediately and unconditionally release hostages.
- Fully respect and adhere to humanitarian principles and international law.

To Third States:

- Take concrete actions to ensure an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza.
- Secure the immediate and unconditional release of the hostages.
- Take urgent steps to bring an end to all Israeli actions in Gaza which may amount to genocide, including by ensuring as a first step that Israel duly implements all provisional measures ordered by the ICJ since 26 January 2024.
- Take concrete measures to end the suffocating blockade of humanitarian aid and to uphold the right of civilians in Gaza to access aid safely and to protection.
- Immediately suspend the direct and indirect supply, sale or transfer, including transit and trans-shipment, to parties to the conflict of all weapons, munitions and other military and security equipment, including the provision of training and other military and security assistance, in light of the clear risk that they could contribute to the commission of serious violations of IHL and international human rights law.
- Fully comply with their obligations under IHL and redouble efforts to ensure respect for IHL by parties to the conflict, as required under Common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions. By failing to take appropriate measures to prevent or respond to IHL violations, Third States would themselves be in breach of international law.
- States should take appropriate measures, such as the imposition of a comprehensive arms embargo when these arms contribute to the ongoing violations of IHL and harm civilian population. Additionally, they should impose financial restrictions, and diplomatic measures (reducing diplomatic engagement or suspending cooperation agreements), in order to



ensure compliance with IHL and the protection of civilians. All such measures should be implemented in a manner that includes explicit humanitarian carve-outs and safeguards to enable the delivery of lifesaving assistance and avoid further harm to vulnerable and conflict-affected populations.

- Signatory states of the political declaration on EWIPA should strongly condemn attacks directed against civilians and civilian infrastructures, as mentioned in the political declaration (article 2.6).
- States should strictly monitor the implementation of Resolution 2475 (2019) on the protection of persons with disabilities in the armed conflict and should ensure adherence to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to address the detrimental health impacts of the protracted occupation, hostilities, violence and insecurity on persons with injuries and disabilities.
- Support restoring a unified, UN-led coordination mechanism, grounded in IHL and inclusive of UNRWA, Palestinian civil society and the wider humanitarian community to meet the needs of the population.
- Rescind any measures that restrict humanitarian and civic space, including the recent decisions on INGO registration and visa requirements.

On ending Israel's unlawful presence in the oPt:

All States must uphold their legal obligations, including under the ICJ AO on Israel's presence in the occupied Palestinian territory, reinforced by the UNGA resolution, and take concrete actions to:

- Halt Israel's annexation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and to end Israel's unlawful presence in the oPt.
- Use all lawful measures to stop forcible transfers, including demolitions and forced evictions, and ensuring the Palestinian people's right to remain on their land is upheld.
- Prevent Israel's announced additional fragmentation of the oPt and unlawful presence in the oPt and call for the full withdrawal of troops.

On INGO registration:

- Oppose Israeli-imposed vetting:
 - Demands for staff and family data violate protection and privacy standards and expose staff especially Palestinians to serious risk. Existing vetting and anti-diversion systems are sufficient. No sensitive data should be shared with a party to the conflict.
 - Donors should clearly express their firm confidence in existing INGO safeguards and affirm that additional vetting requirements are both unfeasible and unjustified.
 - Use all possible means to protect humanitarian operations from measures that compromise neutrality, independence, and access.
 - Protect and support INGOs and Palestinian and Israeli civil society organisations by providing legal assistance, diplomatic support, and flexible funding to mitigate the legal, financial, and reputational risks associated with the new registration procedures. Donors must defend principled humanitarian and human rights work.

Boost funding for the relief response in the oPt:



- Donors, private companies and wealthy individuals across the world must provide direct, flexible, quality, and sufficient funding for the humanitarian response, including to INGOs, UNRWA, and Palestinian NGOs.
- Donors must urgently scale up funding for humanitarian mine action in Gaza, including technical and non-technical surveys, clearance, EO risk education, and victim assistance to ensure that survivors are identified, monitored and receive the necessary medical rehabilitation and MHPSS support.
- Ensure that funding takes into account the needs of the most at risk population.
- Allocate funding for collecting data on rehabilitation needs and disability.

To the UN and other humanitarian organizations:

- Include the provision of rehabilitation services and assistive technology within the emergency medical response.
- Ensure that early rehabilitation needs are integrated into the humanitarian response and rehabilitation professionals are systematically part of Emergency Medical Teams. Provision of rehabilitation should be part of the entire patient cycle, from needs' identification to follow-up after the patient's discharge.
- Rehabilitation professionals need to adopt a patient-centred approach, meaning that they need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to meet patient needs in emergency medical response, especially groups at higher risk of developing co-morbidities, such as people with existing disabilities or chronic health conditions.
- Ensure access to assistive devices, in particular prosthetic and orthotics, for all civilian patients, their adaptation and maintenance.
- Strengthen the quality and quantity of rehabilitation services by investing in education and expanding specialized training for technical human resources.
- Document and collect data on rehabilitation needs and disability including those with new injuries.
- Ensure all advocacy efforts and needs assessments emphasize the unmet needs of persons with disabilities.
- Reject and refuse to participate in any plans for the militarisation of aid, proposed by Israel.