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**Israeli practices and settlement activities affecting the  
rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the  
occupied territories**

## **Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories**

### **Note by the Secretary-General**

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the fifty-seventh report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, submitted pursuant to Assembly resolution [78/76](#).

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\* [A/80/150](#).



## **Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories\*\***

### *Summary*

The present report contains information regarding Israeli practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan from August 2024 to July 2025. In particular, the ongoing genocide of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip is highlighted.

In part V, developments during the reporting period are documented, including the expanded Israeli presence in and control of additional territory in the Syrian Arab Republic and southern Lebanon, in the light of the “Greater Israel” project. A warning is given of the consequences for peace and human rights in the region should Israel persist in its current occupation or pursue further territorial expansion.

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\*\* The content at some of the links in the present report may be distressing to some readers.

## **I. Introduction**

1. The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories was established in 1968 by the General Assembly in its resolution [2443 \(XXIII\)](#). It is composed of three Member States: Malaysia, represented by the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, Ahmad Faisal Muhamad; Senegal, represented by the Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations, Coly Seck; and Sri Lanka, represented by the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations, Jayantha Jayasuriya, serving as Chair. The Special Committee reports to the Secretary-General. Its reports are reviewed in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) of the General Assembly.

## **II. Mandate and activities of the Special Committee**

2. The Special Committee is mandated to investigate Israeli policies and practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the territories that have remained under Israeli occupation since 1967. The Special Committee is not mandated to investigate human rights violations committed by other duty bearers in those territories. The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [78/76](#), covers the period from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025.

3. Since its establishment in 1968, the Special Committee has not been granted access by Israel to the occupied territories, but it continues to seek cooperation. In April 2025, and once more ahead of its annual field mission, the Special Committee again requested the cooperation of Israel with its mandate, including access to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Israel and the occupied Syrian Golan, and a meeting with the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva. The Government of Israel did not respond to those requests.

4. In the absence of access to the occupied territories, the Special Committee conducted a field visit to Amman from 5 to 9 May 2025, during which it visited Amman New Camp for Palestine refugees (formerly Wihdat Camp) and met with high-level Government officials, representatives of United Nations entities, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the Independent Commission for Human Rights, and civil society and young people's organizations from the Middle East region.

5. Due to budget constraints, the annual consultations in Geneva were held online. The Special Committee met with: the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967; a member of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel; and government officials and other stakeholders.

## **III. Situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory**

### **A. Ongoing genocide of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip**

6. In its previous report, the Special Committee concluded that the conduct of Israel with respect to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip was consistent with the

characteristics of genocide.<sup>1</sup> Given the developments during the reporting period, the Special Committee is ever more convinced that the world is witnessing genocide in Gaza – a conclusion that is increasingly supported and shared by leading human rights experts and organizations,<sup>2</sup> genocide scholars<sup>3</sup> and States.<sup>4</sup>

7. Despite mounting alerts about the grave violations of international law in Gaza, including by senior officials of the United Nations,<sup>5</sup> and about the continued military onslaught of Israel and its non-compliance with the binding orders issued in 2024 by the International Court of Justice,<sup>6</sup> and despite the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court for the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, and the Minister of Defence of Israel at the time, Yoav Gallant, for crimes against humanity and war crimes, Israel continued to engage in such conduct and to enjoy impunity, including by being shielded from sanctions and by continuing to receive arms supplies.

8. Israel has continued with its bombardment and demolition of the civilian infrastructure of Gaza, including residential buildings, shelters, schools, hospitals<sup>7</sup> and religious and cultural sites,<sup>8</sup> killing thousands and leaving 70 per cent of all infrastructure across the Gaza Strip damaged or destroyed.<sup>9</sup> Lethal attacks continued even during the ceasefire period in early 2025. During the reporting period, dozens of strikes were conducted on locations to which people had been ordered to move by the Israeli military, and which were claimed to be “safe zones” or “known shelters”. As at 30 July 2025, 86.3 per cent of the Gaza Strip was designated as a “no-go zone”, or under displacement orders, or both.<sup>10</sup> According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, 60,138 Palestinians had been killed and 146,269 injured since 7 October 2023, the majority of them women and children, and tens of thousands were believed to remain under the rubble. Experts concluded that the real death toll, including indirect deaths,

<sup>1</sup> See A/79/363.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, [www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/12/amnesty-international-concludes-israel-is-committing-genocide-against-palestinians-in-gaza/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/12/amnesty-international-concludes-israel-is-committing-genocide-against-palestinians-in-gaza/); [www.hrw.org/news/2025/05/15/gaza-latest-israeli-plan-inches-closer-extermination](https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/05/15/gaza-latest-israeli-plan-inches-closer-extermination); [www.btselem.org/publications/202507\\_our\\_genocide](https://www.btselem.org/publications/202507_our_genocide); [www.phr.org.il/en/genocide-in-gaza-eng/](https://www.phr.org.il/en/genocide-in-gaza-eng/); and [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/04/turk-calls-world-prevent-total-humanitarian-catastrophe-gaza](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/04/turk-calls-world-prevent-total-humanitarian-catastrophe-gaza).

<sup>3</sup> See [www.lemonde.fr/en/opinion/article/2024/10/29/amos-goldberg-what-is-happening-in-gaza-is-a-genocide-because-gaza-does-not-exist-anymore\\_6730881\\_23.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/opinion/article/2024/10/29/amos-goldberg-what-is-happening-in-gaza-is-a-genocide-because-gaza-does-not-exist-anymore_6730881_23.html); [www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2025/05/14/zeven-gerenommeerde-wetenschappers-vrijwel-eensgezind-israel-pleegt-in-gaza-genocide-a4893293](https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2025/05/14/zeven-gerenommeerde-wetenschappers-vrijwel-eensgezind-israel-pleegt-in-gaza-genocide-a4893293); and [www.nytimes.com/2025/07/15/opinion/israel-gaza-holocaust-genocide-palestinians.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/15/opinion/israel-gaza-holocaust-genocide-palestinians.html).

<sup>4</sup> See <https://sloveniatimes.com/43569/president-calls-out-israel-for-genocide>; [www.reuters.com/video/watch/idRW884510072025RP1/](https://www.reuters.com/video/watch/idRW884510072025RP1/); and <https://thehaguegroup.org/meetings-bogota-en/>.

<sup>5</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/04/turk-calls-world-prevent-total-humanitarian-catastrophe-gaza](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/04/turk-calls-world-prevent-total-humanitarian-catastrophe-gaza); [www.unocha.org/news/un-relief-chief-calls-security-council-act-decisively-prevent-genocide-gaza](https://www.unocha.org/news/un-relief-chief-calls-security-council-act-decisively-prevent-genocide-gaza); [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/05/turk-deplores-gaza-escalation-pleads-global-action-stop-more-killings](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/05/turk-deplores-gaza-escalation-pleads-global-action-stop-more-killings); [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/05/gaza-un-child-rights-committee-condemns-mass-starvation-children-amid-aid](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/05/gaza-un-child-rights-committee-condemns-mass-starvation-children-amid-aid); and [www.unicef.org/press-releases/unicef-executive-director-catherine-russells-remarks-humanitarian-situation-children](https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unicef-executive-director-catherine-russells-remarks-humanitarian-situation-children).

<sup>6</sup> See [www.icj-cij.org/case/192](https://www.icj-cij.org/case/192).

<sup>7</sup> See [www.who.int/news/item/22-05-2025-health-system-at-breaking-point-as-hostilities-further-intensify--who-warns](https://www.who.int/news/item/22-05-2025-health-system-at-breaking-point-as-hostilities-further-intensify--who-warns).

<sup>8</sup> See [www.unesco.org/en/gaza/assessment](https://www.unesco.org/en/gaza/assessment); and [www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2025-07/pope-leo-gaza-church-barbarity-netanyahu.html](https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2025-07/pope-leo-gaza-church-barbarity-netanyahu.html).

<sup>9</sup> See [www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-30-july-2025](https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-30-july-2025).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

might be much higher.<sup>11</sup> In late July 2025, the organization Physicians for Human Rights-Israel warned that, even if Israel stopped its offensive at that point, the destruction that had been inflicted guaranteed that preventable deaths from starvation, infection and chronic illness would continue for years.<sup>12</sup>

9. Although the ceasefire agreement reached in January 2025 provided for increased humanitarian aid, Israel enforced a full humanitarian blockade from 2 March onward, and proceeded to break the ceasefire two weeks later. While the blockade was partially lifted on 19 May, restrictions and denial of access continued to impede the humanitarian response. A new aid distribution system, the “Gaza Humanitarian Foundation”, which is supported by the United States of America and Israel, started operations on 27 May 2025. Employing armed contractors and operating in only four locations under the full control of Israeli forces, the system did not comply with core humanitarian principles. As a result, the United Nations refused to collaborate with it. Purported to prevent Hamas from diverting aid, a practice that Israel denounced without providing evidence for its occurrence,<sup>13</sup> the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation system undermined the provision of supplies and services that the United Nations actors and partners used to deliver at over 400 sites across the Strip. While the aid distributed met only a fraction of what was needed, Israeli forces had killed 1,373 Palestinians, 859 in the vicinity of sites managed by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation and 514 along the routes of food convoys, as at 31 July 2025.<sup>14</sup> Israeli military officers and soldiers told the media that, despite the absence of a threat, they had been ordered to fire at unarmed Palestinians seeking to gain access to the sites. Armed contractors cited similar orders as the reason for their resignation from the scheme.<sup>15</sup>

10. The killing of personnel protected under international law continued at an alarming rate. During the reporting period, an additional 212 aid workers, including 130 United Nations staff members, 1,080 health workers and 66 journalists and other media workers were killed in Gaza by Israeli strikes or gunfire.<sup>16</sup> As at 30 July 2025, at least 89 children were reported to have died of malnutrition due to the aid restrictions imposed by Israel and its weaponization of food.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Zeina Jamaluddine et al., “Traumatic injury mortality in the Gaza Strip from Oct 7, 2023, to June 30, 2024: a capture–recapture analysis”, in *The Lancet*, vol. 405, issue 10477 (8 February 2025), pp. 469–477, available at [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(24\)02678-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(24)02678-3); Rachel Fieldhouse, “First independent survey of deaths in Gaza reports more than 80,000 fatalities”, in *Nature*, issue No. 643 (2025), pp. 311–2, available at <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-025-02009-8>; Michael Spagat et al., “Violent and nonviolent death tolls for the Gaza War: new primary evidence”, preprint article available at <https://doi.org/10.1101/2025.06.19.25329797>; [www.dw.com/en/gaza-what-is-the-actual-death-toll-and-how-can-we-be-sure/a-73136975](http://www.dw.com/en/gaza-what-is-the-actual-death-toll-and-how-can-we-be-sure/a-73136975); [www.economist.com/interactive/middle-east-and-africa/2025/05/08/how-many-people-have-died-in-gaza](http://www.economist.com/interactive/middle-east-and-africa/2025/05/08/how-many-people-have-died-in-gaza); and <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/2024/IndirectDeathsGaza>.

<sup>12</sup> See [www.phr.org.il/en/genocide-in-gaza-eng/](http://www.phr.org.il/en/genocide-in-gaza-eng/).

<sup>13</sup> See [www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/usaid-analysis-found-no-evidence-massive-hamas-theft-gaza-aid-2025-07-25/](http://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/usaid-analysis-found-no-evidence-massive-hamas-theft-gaza-aid-2025-07-25/) and [www.nytimes.com/2025/07/26/world/middleeast/hamas-un-aid-theft.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/26/world/middleeast/hamas-un-aid-theft.html).

<sup>14</sup> See [www.un.org/unispal/document/ohchr-killings-of-palestinians-seeking-food-in-gaza-continue-as-starvation-deepens-press-release/](http://www.un.org/unispal/document/ohchr-killings-of-palestinians-seeking-food-in-gaza-continue-as-starvation-deepens-press-release/).

<sup>15</sup> See [www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-06-27/ty-article-magazine/.premium/idf-soldiers-ordered-to-shoot-deliberately-at-unarmed-gazans-waiting-for-humanitarian-aid/00000197-ad8e-de01-a39f-ffbe33780000](http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-06-27/ty-article-magazine/.premium/idf-soldiers-ordered-to-shoot-deliberately-at-unarmed-gazans-waiting-for-humanitarian-aid/00000197-ad8e-de01-a39f-ffbe33780000); <https://x.com/SpectateursFr/status/1948011699568550016>; [www.bbc.com/news/videos/cy8k8045nx9o](http://www.bbc.com/news/videos/cy8k8045nx9o); and [www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/7/31/ghf-whistleblower-says-boy-killed-by-israel-just-after-he-collected-aid](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/7/31/ghf-whistleblower-says-boy-killed-by-israel-just-after-he-collected-aid).

<sup>16</sup> See [www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-31-july-2024](http://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-31-july-2024) and [www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-30-july-2025](http://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-30-july-2025).

<sup>17</sup> See [www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-309-gaza-strip](http://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-309-gaza-strip).

11. The Palestinians in Gaza face an impossible choice: starve, or risk death or injury while trying to receive food.<sup>18</sup> The Special Committee condemns the use of starvation as a method of warfare and the killing of individuals desperate for food. It urges the Government of Israel to dismantle the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation system, fully lift the blockade on items indispensable for the survival of the civilian population, and allow and facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need that is impartial in character and delivered without any adverse distinction.<sup>19</sup>

## **B. Violence unleashed in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem**

12. During the reporting period, violence perpetrated by the Israeli State and settlers in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, rose to an unprecedented level. Such violence included: attacks resulting in deaths and injuries; property destruction, including mass demolitions; land confiscation; arbitrary detentions; and daily harassment, some of which took the form of debilitating restrictions on movement. During the reporting period, at least 6 Palestinians were killed by settlers and 399 were killed by Israeli security forces,<sup>20</sup> including apparent cases of extrajudicial and other unlawful killings,<sup>21</sup> and another 3,934 Palestinians were injured by settlers or security forces.<sup>22</sup>

13. In the northern West Bank, Israel unduly used means and methods of warfare, such as air strikes, shoulder-fired missiles and tanks, that are contrary to international human rights law and the obligations of Israel as the occupying Power.<sup>23</sup> Following large-scale operations in refugee camps in Janin and Tulkarm in August 2024, the Minister of Defence of Israel stated that “Israel must address the threat” from armed groups in the camps “exactly” as in Gaza, and described the situation as “a war in every sense”.<sup>24</sup> In January 2025, in the wake of an agreement between the Palestinian National Security Forces and armed militants that had brought an end to six weeks of lethal clashes and destruction in Jenin camp,<sup>25</sup> Israel launched operation “Iron Wall”, the largest Israel Defense Forces operation in the West Bank in decades, initially targeting camps in Jenin and Tulkarm before extending to Tubas and Nablus. Although Israel said that it was targeting “terrorists”, the actions of armed militants were largely localized and mostly in reaction to the Israeli military raids. At the same time, Israeli use of force resulted in hundreds of casualties among unarmed civilians in the camps, in particular owing to gunshots during house raids.<sup>26</sup> Aside from deaths and injuries, over 40,000 Palestinians were forced to leave the camps at short notice.

<sup>18</sup> See [www.972mag.com/hunger-games-israel-gaza-food-aid/](http://www.972mag.com/hunger-games-israel-gaza-food-aid/).

<sup>19</sup> See [www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC\\_GazaStrip\\_Alert\\_July2025.pdf](http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_GazaStrip_Alert_July2025.pdf) and [www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2025-07-29/statement-the-secretary-general-the-ipc-alert-gaza](http://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2025-07-29/statement-the-secretary-general-the-ipc-alert-gaza).

<sup>20</sup> See [www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties](http://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties).

<sup>21</sup> A/HRC/58/28, paras. 29–35.

<sup>22</sup> See [www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties](http://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties).

<sup>23</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2025/01/concern-use-unlawful-lethal-force-jenin-occupied-west-bank](http://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2025/01/concern-use-unlawful-lethal-force-jenin-occupied-west-bank).

<sup>24</sup> See [https://x.com/Israel\\_katz/status/1828654399360586025](https://x.com/Israel_katz/status/1828654399360586025).

<sup>25</sup> See <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/un-human-rights-office-opt-teen-killed-palestinian-security-forces-occupied-west-bank-enar>.

<sup>26</sup> See <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/02/1159971> and <https://acleddata.com/2025/05/02/iron-wall-or-iron-fist-palestinian-militancy-and-israels-campaign-to-reshape-the-northern-west-bank/>.

By the end of the reporting period, about 30,000 remained forcibly displaced, and hundreds of homes and kilometres of roads had been demolished.<sup>27</sup>

14. Special procedure mandate holders, among others, have warned that the escalation of deadly violence coincided “with unprecedented levels of increased colonies’ expansion, armed settler violence, displacement, depopulation and land confiscation by the State of Israel including through settler militias”.<sup>28</sup> In March 2025, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 warned that Palestinians faced a “serious risk of mass ethnic cleansing”,<sup>29</sup> and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reported that the Government of Israel had “ratcheted up settlement of the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, transferring its own population into the territory and unlawfully demolishing Palestinian homes”.<sup>30</sup>

15. The Special Committee is shocked by the extent of land confiscation, targeting of communities, separation of families, demolitions, forced evictions, killings, physical abuse and other tactics employed by settlers and Israeli security forces to push Palestinian communities from their lands and homes. The changes in the geography and demography of the occupied West Bank resulting from the increase in outposts and settlements combined with attacks on and clearances of refugee camps are worrying. At the same time, the ongoing transfer of government powers over the Occupied Palestinian Territory from the Israeli military to civilian government officials increasingly left the management of the occupation in the hands of extremist and violent settlers.

### C. Detentions

16. The Special Committee has received disturbing briefings on the systematic and widespread perpetration of sexual and gender-based violence, torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment inflicted on Palestinian detainees by Israeli military and security forces, as also reported by the Commission of Inquiry.<sup>31</sup> Thousands of individuals were reportedly held in Israeli prisons and military camps, some under the “Incarceration of Unlawful Combatants Law”. Most were detained without due process, without access to family and in severely unhygienic conditions. Detainees faced daily physical and psychological abuse and torture, and many suffered from scabies and other skin infections due to the appalling environment. The torture and ill-treatment were such that special procedure mandate holders denounced them as a crime against humanity, warning that the high-profile case of the gang-rape of a detainee in the Israel Defense Forces detention facility of Sde Teiman represented the tip of the iceberg.<sup>32</sup> The Special Committee also received information about the use of rape and gang-rape, including anal rape with objects, targeting both male and female detainees, amid a near-total absence of prison or military investigations and complete lack of accountability.<sup>33</sup> Numerous Palestinian detainees released during the

<sup>27</sup> See *ibid.* and [www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2025/07/israel-must-stop-killings-and-home-demolitions-occupied-west-bank](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2025/07/israel-must-stop-killings-and-home-demolitions-occupied-west-bank).

<sup>28</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/01/no-end-sight-israeli-forces-attack-occupied-west-bank-gaza-ceasefire-takes](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/01/no-end-sight-israeli-forces-attack-occupied-west-bank-gaza-ceasefire-takes).

<sup>29</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/03/tragedy-foretold-and-stain-our-collective-humanity-special-rapporteur-warns](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/03/tragedy-foretold-and-stain-our-collective-humanity-special-rapporteur-warns).

<sup>30</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/03/israel-ramps-settlement-and-annexation-west-bank-dire-human-rights](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/03/israel-ramps-settlement-and-annexation-west-bank-dire-human-rights); see further A/HRC/58/73.

<sup>31</sup> A/79/232, paras. 41–72 and paras. 101–110; see also A/HRC/58/CRP.6.

<sup>32</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/08/israels-escalating-use-torture-against-palestinians-custody-preventable](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/08/israels-escalating-use-torture-against-palestinians-custody-preventable).

<sup>33</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/scip-pa/2025-05-09-eom-stm-scip.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/scip-pa/2025-05-09-eom-stm-scip.pdf).

ceasefire in early 2025 required urgent medical treatment, and some bore signs of acute malnutrition and other forms of torture.<sup>34</sup>

17. Israel has arrested, arbitrarily detained or held incommunicado tens of thousands of Palestinians since 7 October 2023,<sup>35</sup> raising concerns of enforced disappearance. Verifying figures is difficult given the lack of information shared by the authorities, the denial of access to lawyers and relatives, and the fact that Israel continues to deny visits to places of detention by the International Committee of the Red Cross. On 18 July 2025, special procedure mandate holders warned that about 4,000 Palestinians, including children and older persons, and 51 Israelis were still missing since 7 October 2023. They called upon the authorities in both Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory to clarify the fate and whereabouts of all victims of enforced disappearance, no matter the circumstances, whether in detention or deceased.<sup>36</sup> The Special Committee echoes that call.

18. On 14 July 2025, the non-governmental organization Palestinian Prisoners Society reported that, since 7 October 2023, over 18,000 Palestinians, including 1,450 children and 560 women, had been arrested by Israeli security forces in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in addition to an unidentified number of detained Palestinians from Gaza. Over the same period, 73 identified Palestinian detainees had died in custody.<sup>37</sup> That number amounted to almost a quarter of the 310 identified Palestinians who had died in Israeli custody since 1967 and had been recorded by the Palestinian Prisoners Society.<sup>38</sup> For the first time since 1967, a juvenile Palestinian detainee, aged 17 years old, died in custody in April 2025, as a result of malnutrition and denial of medical care. In a report, the Commission of Inquiry concluded that the systematic abuse of Palestinian detainees was directly and causally linked to statements made by Israeli officials, including the Minister of National Security, who was responsible for the Israel Prison Service, and other members of the coalition Government, legitimizing revenge and violence against Palestinians.<sup>39</sup>

19. According to the Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center, as at 30 July 2025, Israel retained the bodies of 460 Palestinians (of whom 6 were women and 46 were children),<sup>40</sup> including for use as leverage in negotiations – an Israeli practice long predating October 2023.<sup>41</sup> In August 2024, Israeli forces sent the remains of over 80 unidentified Palestinians to a crossing point into Gaza; it was not clear whether the remains were those of bodies dug up from cemeteries in Gaza or of detainees who had died in detention.<sup>42</sup>

20. For the second year in a row, Israel was included in the annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict. The highest number of grave violations against children in the world in 2024 was verified in Israel and the

<sup>34</sup> See e.g. <https://x.com/SuppressedNws/status/1888390013748166658>.

<sup>35</sup> See [www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/4/17/a-nation-behind-bars-why-has-israel-imprisoned-10000-palestinians](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/4/17/a-nation-behind-bars-why-has-israel-imprisoned-10000-palestinians).

<sup>36</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/07/un-experts-call-end-anguish-families-seeking-truth-about-disappeared-loved](http://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/07/un-experts-call-end-anguish-families-seeking-truth-about-disappeared-loved).

<sup>37</sup> See [www.facebook.com/share/p/1B6jQe6dEL/](https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1B6jQe6dEL/).

<sup>38</sup> See [www.facebook.com/share/p/1CUPWci6Dz/](https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1CUPWci6Dz/).

<sup>39</sup> A/79/232, para. 103.

<sup>40</sup> On file with the Secretariat.

<sup>41</sup> See [www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/high-court-rejects-petition-demanding-release-of-body-of-arab-israeli-terror-convict](http://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/high-court-rejects-petition-demanding-release-of-body-of-arab-israeli-terror-convict). On previous rulings of the High Court of Justice issued since Israel resumed the practice of withholding bodies in 2015, see [www.btselem.org/routine\\_founded\\_on\\_violence/20191022\\_hcj\\_greenlights\\_holding\\_palestinian\\_bodies\\_as\\_bargaining\\_chips](http://www.btselem.org/routine_founded_on_violence/20191022_hcj_greenlights_holding_palestinian_bodies_as_bargaining_chips).

<sup>42</sup> See [www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-202-gaza-strip](http://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-202-gaza-strip).

Occupied Palestinian Territory (8,554), in addition to the verification of another 2,788 grave violations that occurred in 2023 in the Gaza Strip.<sup>43</sup> The overwhelming majority (7,188) of the verified violations were attributed to Israeli armed and security forces, and another 42 to Israeli settlers. Among those violations, including killings, maiming, the destruction of schools, the use of children as human shields and the denial of humanitarian access, the United Nations also verified the detention in 2024, for alleged security offences, of 951 Palestinian children (940 boys, 11 girls) in the West Bank (602), in East Jerusalem (259) and the Gaza Strip (90), including the detention of a Palestinian girl whose whereabouts remained unknown. Over 110 Palestinian children were being held in administrative detention, without charge or trial as at 31 December 2024, and, in addition, 25 children had been transferred to Israel from the Gaza Strip and detained under the “unlawful combatant” designation.<sup>44</sup> The Special Committee is particularly concerned by the targeting of children and their treatment in detention, and urges the Government of Israel to immediately release all children held in administrative and other arbitrary detention and cease the ill-treatment and torture of detainees. Moreover, the Special Committee echoes the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined fifth and sixth reports of Israel and the recommendations contained therein.<sup>45</sup>

#### **D. Artificial intelligence and technology**

21. The Special Committee remains extremely concerned about the use by the Israeli military of artificial intelligence and surveillance technologies, which proved to be key contributing factors in the horrifying number of civilian casualties.<sup>46</sup> The practice has been extensively reported by civil society actors,<sup>47</sup> including a report issued in May 2025 by the Palestinian Return Centre entitled “Algorithms of death: how AI fuels mass killings in Gaza”, in which the Centre documented how the Israeli military has continued its systematic use of artificial intelligence in Gaza.<sup>48</sup>

22. In a conference entitled “IT for IDF” in August 2024, an official of the Israel Defense Forces publicly confirmed that the Israeli army was using cloud storage and artificial intelligence services provided by companies to assist with military operations.<sup>49</sup> The Special Committee takes note of this fact, which may require further scrutiny and examination in order to ascertain whether the companies providing the digital and physical infrastructure used by the Israeli army for its genocidal warfare in Gaza may be considered complicit. The Special Committee notes the latest report submitted to the Human Rights Council by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, in which she raised similar concerns that go well beyond the digital and artificial intelligence industry.<sup>50</sup>

23. The Special Committee is concerned that the Government of Israel and the military companies associated with it appear to be using the Occupied Palestinian Territory as a testing ground and for the real-life promotion of its military

<sup>43</sup> See [A/79/878-S/2025/247](#).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> [CRC/C/ISR/CO/5-6](#).

<sup>46</sup> [A/79/363](#), para. 11; see also <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-ai-technology-737bc17af7b03e98c29cec4e15d0f108?>

<sup>47</sup> See [www.hrw.org/news/2024/09/10/gaza-israeli-militarys-digital-tools-risk-civilian-harm](https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/09/10/gaza-israeli-militarys-digital-tools-risk-civilian-harm).

<sup>48</sup> See <https://prc.org.uk/en/post/4957/algorithms-of-death-how-artificial-intelligence-fuels-mass-killings-in-gaza>.

<sup>49</sup> See [www.972mag.com/cloud-israeli-army-gaza-amazon-google-microsoft/](https://www.972mag.com/cloud-israeli-army-gaza-amazon-google-microsoft/).

<sup>50</sup> See [A/HRC/59/23](#).

technology.<sup>51</sup> Business enterprises may wish to consider disengaging from current and future agreements with the Israeli military on the grounds that the facilities that they provide assist the Israeli military in committing grave violations.

## E. Civic space

24. The Special Committee remains concerned that individuals and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) seeking to expose human rights violations and abuses in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel and/or working to provide humanitarian and other assistance to Palestinians have continued to face intimidation, hindrance, arrest and detention under Israeli laws and practices, and to face physical assaults by Israeli security forces and settlers, not to mention air strikes in Gaza.

25. In September 2024, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders warned that there was “literally no place left” for human rights defenders and civil society actors documenting Israeli human rights violations in Gaza.<sup>52</sup> In April 2025, major international NGOs urged the Government of Israel to let them do their jobs, noting that 95 per cent of 43 recently surveyed international and Palestinian aid organizations active in Gaza had “had to suspend or dramatically cut services since the ceasefire ended one month ago on 18 March, with widespread and indiscriminate bombing making it extremely dangerous to move around”.<sup>53</sup>

26. The Special Committee has received alarming reports concerning legislative and regulatory developments in Israel. In February, a bill was approved on first reading that would impose an 80 per cent tax on foreign State entities’ grants to Israeli non-profit organizations not funded by the Israeli State.<sup>54</sup> The bill would also restrict the ability of non-profit organizations to petition an Israeli court – one of the few means available to Israeli human rights NGOs to mitigate or seek redress for violations of Palestinians’ rights. In a revised version of the bill, which was debated in July, the levy was reduced to 23 per cent; however, a new condition was added in order for grants to remain tax-exempted, namely, a commitment to refrain from any attempt to influence Israeli public policy for three years from the date of the grant notice. Examples of such attempts would include public gatherings of a “political nature”, participating in “political demonstrations” or engaging in public advocacy in the lead-up to the elections to be held in Israel in 2026.<sup>55</sup> If adopted, that measure would risk shutting down or silencing most Israeli organizations defending the rights of Palestinians or calling for the occupation to end, while preserving the entities closely aligned with the current Government, including settlers organizations that receive significant funding from foreign private sources.

27. On 9 March 2025, Israel issued new registration and visa regulations for foreign NGOs “primarily” engaged in providing humanitarian aid to Palestinians.<sup>56</sup> Among other concerns, the regulations, which are set to take effect in early September 2025, require NGOs to submit extensive information on their national employees, and provide extensive discretion to the relevant authority (placed under the Ministry for

<sup>51</sup> See <https://x.com/QudsNen/status/1944088627169878123> and <https://euobserver.com/EU%20&%20the%20World/ar3d4c0186>.

<sup>52</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/09/attacks-against-human-rights-defenders-and-oblivation-civic-space-gaza](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/09/attacks-against-human-rights-defenders-and-oblivation-civic-space-gaza).

<sup>53</sup> See [www.oxfamamerica.org/press/let-us-do-our-jobs-major-aid-groups-in-gaza-warn-aid-system-is-collapsing/](https://www.oxfamamerica.org/press/let-us-do-our-jobs-major-aid-groups-in-gaza-warn-aid-system-is-collapsing/).

<sup>54</sup> See <https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press19225d.aspx?utm>.

<sup>55</sup> See [www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-07-21/ty-article/.premium/netanyahu-coalition-debates-bill-giving-ngos-tax-breaks-for-not-criticizing-govt/00000198-2da0-d5d4-a9fd-6fe722890000](https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-07-21/ty-article/.premium/netanyahu-coalition-debates-bill-giving-ngos-tax-breaks-for-not-criticizing-govt/00000198-2da0-d5d4-a9fd-6fe722890000).

<sup>56</sup> See [www.gov.il/he/pages/dec2542-2024](https://www.gov.il/he/pages/dec2542-2024) and [www.gov.il/en/pages/interministerial\\_team\\_registration\\_humanitarian\\_organizations\\_foreign\\_employees](https://www.gov.il/en/pages/interministerial_team_registration_humanitarian_organizations_foreign_employees).

Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism of Israel) to review or reject registration and visa applications. Prominent Israeli NGOs warned that the regulations established a framework to intimidate and punish international organizations that provide humanitarian assistance and also bear witness to violations.<sup>57</sup> Foreign and international NGOs operating in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory also issued an urgent call, stressing that the regulations would “penalise principled humanitarian work or expose staff to retaliation” and gravely threatened humanitarian operations and international law.<sup>58</sup> As the reporting period came to an end, concerns were already materializing.

28. The Special Committee observes that the genocide in Gaza has had a devastating effect on civic space well beyond the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel. In many countries, peaceful demonstrations and other legitimate expression supporting Palestinians’ rights and denouncing the commission of international crimes by Israel have been conflated with terrorism, antisemitism or both. The Special Committee believes that all States should support independent and effective investigations into reported allegations, ensure accountability for international crimes and act on their obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.<sup>59</sup>

29. The Special Committee urges the international community to offer steadfast political and financial support to all civil society organizations that support Palestinian issues and strive for peace, an end to the occupation, and equal human rights.

## **F. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East**

30. The Special Committee reiterates its concerns about the continued campaign of the Government of Israel against UNRWA. Israel has targeted the Agency in multiple ways to prevent it from delivering on its mandate and to eliminate it altogether in order to undermine the Palestine refugees’ right of return.

31. The smear campaign orchestrated by the Government of Israel<sup>60</sup> and supportive lobby groups<sup>61</sup> has continued unabated, in an endeavour to tie the Agency to terrorism. In February 2025, the Agency published a fact sheet entitled “UNRWA: claims versus facts”, in an attempt to dismantle misinformation and disinformation being spread about its staff and operations.<sup>62</sup> The Agency has consistently called upon Israel to lift its ban on international media.<sup>63</sup>

32. On 28 October 2024, the Knesset adopted legislation<sup>64</sup> prohibiting contact between UNRWA and any Israeli officials, and prohibiting any UNRWA activities in

<sup>57</sup> <https://gisha.org/en/ngos-in-israel-condemn-an-israeli-government-decision-designed-to-deny-registration-and-work-visas-to-international-humanitarian-organizations> and <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/implementation-new-israeli-ngo-registration-and-visa-regulations>.

<sup>58</sup> See [www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/israels-new-ngo-registration-measures-are-grave-threat-humanitarian-operations](http://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/israels-new-ngo-registration-measures-are-grave-threat-humanitarian-operations).

<sup>59</sup> See <https://www.icj-cij.org/case/192>.

<sup>60</sup> See <https://govextra.gov.il/unrwa/unrwa/>.

<sup>61</sup> See <https://unwatch.org/the-case-against-unrwa/> and <https://hrvoices.org/article/human-rights-expert-unrwa-is-anti-peace-by-design/>.

<sup>62</sup> See [www.unrwa.org/unrwa-claims-versus-facts-2025](http://www.unrwa.org/unrwa-claims-versus-facts-2025).

<sup>63</sup> See [www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-commissioner-general-gaza-ban-entry-international-media-must-be-lifted](http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-commissioner-general-gaza-ban-entry-international-media-must-be-lifted).

<sup>64</sup> See A/79/558.

the State of Israel, including in East Jerusalem, which Israel considers to be part of its territory. The legislation has had serious consequences for UNRWA operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and, by extension, for the broader United Nations humanitarian response in Gaza.

33. As at 30 July 2025, 330 UNRWA staff members in Gaza had been killed by Israeli fire since 7 October 2023.<sup>65</sup> At least 1 of them was summarily executed by Israeli soldiers together with 14 other paramedics and rescue workers on 23 March 2025.<sup>66</sup> On 5 June 2025, the Secretary-General stressed that the fatalities amounted to “more than one in every 50 UNRWA staff in Gaza” and were “the highest staff death toll in United Nations history”.<sup>67</sup>

34. UNRWA facilities, including schools, healthcare centres,<sup>68</sup> aid distribution centres, shelters and operation centres, were relentlessly struck by Israeli forces. As at 22 July 2025, UNRWA had recorded at least 885 incidents affecting its premises and the people inside them since 7 October 2023. As a result of those incidents, 311 (or nearly all) UNRWA installations have been affected, some of them multiple times. Over the same period, at least 842 persons sheltering in UNRWA installations were reported killed and at least 2,544 injured.<sup>69</sup>

35. In addition to the attacks on UNRWA, the Special Committee deplores the attacks against other United Nations entities, including members of the Commission of Inquiry<sup>70</sup> and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.<sup>71</sup> With regard to the latter, the Special Committee condemns the sanctions imposed on the current mandate holder by the United States.

#### IV. Human rights situation in the occupied Syrian Golan

36. As Israel dramatically intensified its strikes on Lebanon in September 2024, it imposed restrictions on movement and large gatherings in the occupied Syrian Golan, most of which were lifted after the cessation of hostilities with Lebanon went into effect on 27 November 2024. They were fully lifted after Israel took control of further Syrian territory east of the occupied Golan in early December 2024. During the reporting period, Israel took steps to consolidate and expand its occupation of the Syrian Golan, both the territory that it had unlawfully annexed in 1981, and beyond.

37. On 8 December 2024, the day on which the previous Government of the Syrian Arab Republic fell, the Prime Minister of Israel declared that the United Nations-monitored Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces of 1974 – establishing a separation zone between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic, bordered by areas of limitation – was null and void. That same day, the Israel Defense Forces launched air strikes across the Syrian Arab Republic and took control of the Syrian side of Mount Hermon and other key areas within the area of separation. Although Israel officially wrote, in identical letters dated 9 December 2024 addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, that its presence in the

<sup>65</sup> See [www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-30-july-2025](https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-30-july-2025).

<sup>66</sup> See [www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-commissioner-general-gaza-summary-execution-among-more-310-unrwa](https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-commissioner-general-gaza-summary-execution-among-more-310-unrwa).

<sup>67</sup> See <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/06/1164086>.

<sup>68</sup> See [www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-commissioner-general-gaza-even-ruins-have-become-target](https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-commissioner-general-gaza-even-ruins-have-become-target).

<sup>69</sup> See [www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-181-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem](https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-181-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem).

<sup>70</sup> See <https://unwatch.org/pillay-commission/>.

<sup>71</sup> See <https://unwatch.org/francesca-albanese/>.

buffer zone was “limited and temporary”;<sup>72</sup> the Prime Minister stated on 18 December that Israeli troops would “occupy [the] recently seized buffer zone in Syria for the foreseeable future”;<sup>73</sup> the Minister of Defence stated in January that the Israel Defense Forces would remain there “indefinitely”;<sup>74</sup> and in February 2025 the Prime Minister referred to “an unlimited period of time” – while also calling for the demilitarization of the entire southern Syrian governorates of Qunaytirah, Dar‘a and Suwayda’.<sup>75</sup> In practice, as at 31 July 2025, Israel continued to occupy the area of separation and maintained military positions in the adjacent area, in violation of the Disengagement Agreement. Addressing the Security Council in March 2025, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria warned that “such facts on the ground [were] not easily reversed”.<sup>76</sup>

38. On 16 December 2024, the Israeli Cabinet further approved a plan to double the Israeli population in the occupied Syrian Golan, allocating the equivalent of approximately \$11 million to education, energy, the establishment of a student village and the absorption of new residents.<sup>77</sup> The Special Committee was informed that two new settlements were already being built that could house 2,000 new and existing settlers. Interlocutors stressed that by taking control of the “buffer zone”, which has significant water reserves, Israel could redirect water to the new settlements, which would have catastrophic consequences for the Syrian villagers in the zone.

39. The Special Committee was told that the decision of Israel to increase and expand its control and the settlements in the previously and newly occupied areas in the Syrian Arab Republic was not unexpected, considering it was aligned with the vision of “Greater Israel”. It was also told that, under Israeli occupation, Syrians were subjected to house raids, contentious harassment and discriminatory policies and practices, particularly related to land and water allocation – the latter of which had already been noted by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in its concluding observations on the combined seventeenth to nineteenth reports of Israel in 2019.<sup>78</sup> The Special Committee also received reports that other Syrian villages and farming land near the buffer zone were affected, that clashes with Israeli forces had led to arrests and deaths, that farmers were not being allowed to farm their land or herd their livestock and that many of their animals were being confiscated or shot by Israeli forces.<sup>79</sup>

40. The Special Committee received information that Israel was trying to engineer a new identity for the inhabitants of the occupied Syrian Golan, in order not to consider them as Syrians or Arabs. Meanwhile, the Druze community and other non-Muslims were being offered the possibility to go to Israel for work, while other Syrian Arabs were discriminated against, for example, people have been arrested for sharing their opinions either in person or online.

41. In March 2025, the Minister of Defence of Israel announced that Syrian Druze would be allowed to enter and work in the occupied Syrian Golan. Two visits managed

<sup>72</sup> See S/2024/887.

<sup>73</sup> See <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/dec/18/netanyahu-israel-occupy-syria-buffer-zone-mount-hermon-foreseeable-future>.

<sup>74</sup> See S/2025/154.

<sup>75</sup> See S/2025/350.

<sup>76</sup> See [https://specialenvoysyria.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/2025-03-25\\_secco\\_un\\_special\\_envoy\\_for\\_syria\\_mr\\_geir\\_o.\\_pedersen\\_briefing\\_as\\_delivered\\_\\_0.pdf](https://specialenvoysyria.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/2025-03-25_secco_un_special_envoy_for_syria_mr_geir_o._pedersen_briefing_as_delivered__0.pdf).

<sup>77</sup> See <https://www.timesofisrael.com/cabinet-approves-11-million-plan-to-double-population-of-golan-heights/>.

<sup>78</sup> CERD/C/ISR/CO/17-19; and see [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2019/12/dialogue-israel-committee-elimination-racial-discrimination-urges-greater](http://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2019/12/dialogue-israel-committee-elimination-racial-discrimination-urges-greater).

<sup>79</sup> Similar complaints were reported to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, see S/2025/154 and S/2025/350. See also [www.972mag.com/southern-syria-new-israeli-occupation/](http://www.972mag.com/southern-syria-new-israeli-occupation/).

by the Israel Defense Forces were also organized for Druze clerics from the Syrian Arab Republic to enter the occupied Syrian Golan in order to visit religious sites in Israel, for the first time in 50 years; 60 clerics visited in March and 600 in April. The visits followed invitations from the Druze community in Israel but were condemned by other Druze in the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon, accusing Israel of “seeking to use the Druze community as a defensive line to achieve its expansionist interests in southern Syria”.<sup>80</sup>

## V. The “Greater Israel” project

42. The historical context of the 1967 borders,<sup>81</sup> land-grabbing and the expansion of Israel into the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza and the Syrian Golan have been extensively documented in official United Nations reports, including by the Special Committee.<sup>82</sup> Since 1967, Israel has consistently expanded or consolidated its presence in and control over occupied territory – whether by allowing unlawful settler outposts, regularizing them, approving and financing settlements, conducting military ground operations and then maintaining military presence and control, or formally annexing territory. In addition to thwarting the emergence of a viable Palestinian State, these actions have had the effect of expanding Israeli territorial control in the region: as at the end of the reporting period, Israeli settlements and/or military posts were established in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Syrian Golan and southern Lebanon.

43. Israeli legislation makes it apparent that settler-colonialism is a key feature of the Israeli State. The “Basic Law: Israel – The Nation-State of the Jewish People” of 2018,<sup>83</sup> which restricts the exercise of national self-determination in the State of Israel to the Jewish people, without defining the borders of the State, introduced “Jewish settlement” for the first time in any Israeli legislation. In addition to enshrining discrimination in the highest legislation, the Basic Law of 2018 elevates Jewish settlement to a national value and stipulates that the State “shall act to encourage and promote its establishment and consolidation”, without specifying where. By defining “the Land of Israel” as the historical homeland of the Jewish people in which the State of Israel was established, and not limiting Jewish settlement to the pre-1967 borders, while expressly including occupied East Jerusalem, the Basic Law effectively promotes Jewish settlement not only within Israel, but also in territories that Israel has occupied since 1967 (including unlawfully as concluded by the International Court of Justice<sup>84</sup>), and potentially beyond.

44. That understanding has been claimed unequivocally by settler groups and key political figures. “Greater Israel” is closely associated with the “Land of Israel” as both terms refer to what some describe as the “historical” biblical land of Israel. Depending on the interpretation, such land includes the combined territory of today’s Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan, or also that of southern Lebanon, or even the entire region from the River Nile to the Euphrates.

<sup>80</sup> See [www.rfi.fr/en/international-news/20250314-syrian-druze-cross-armistice-line-for-pilgrimage-to-israel](http://www.rfi.fr/en/international-news/20250314-syrian-druze-cross-armistice-line-for-pilgrimage-to-israel).

<sup>81</sup> See [www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-201336/](http://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-201336/).

<sup>82</sup> See [www.un.org/unispal/documents/](http://www.un.org/unispal/documents/).

<sup>83</sup> See <https://main.knesset.gov.il/activity/legislation/laws/pages/lawbill.aspx?t=lawreshumot&lawitemid=565913>; and <https://main.knesset.gov.il/EN/activity/Documents/BasicLawsPDF/BasicLawNationState.pdf>.

<sup>84</sup> *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*, para. 285 (3).

For many religious far-right Israeli settlers, this is the “Promised Land” and theirs only, by divine right; for others, it is Jewish land that ought to be part of Israel.

45. Reacting to the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice on 19 July 2024, the Prime Minister of Israel officially stated: “The Jewish people are not occupiers in their own land, including in our eternal capital Jerusalem nor in Judea and Samaria, our historical homeland.”<sup>85</sup> The then Minister of Energy and current Minister of Defence also criticized the court ruling as “fundamentally warped, one-sided and wrong”, stating that it ignored “the historical rights of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel”.<sup>86</sup>

## A. Occupied Palestinian Territory

46. During the reporting period, the practices of the Government of Israel continued to effectively align with the goals of the settler movement and it was clear, from both acts and rhetoric, that the current Israeli administration supported the “Greater Israel” vision.

### Irredentist legislation and policies

47. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, according to reports on Israeli settlements by the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,<sup>87</sup> transfers of administrative and legal powers in relation to land planning and settlements from military officials to civilian officials under the Additional Minister in the Ministry of Defence increasingly facilitated settlement expansion and apparently gave further effect to the assertion and exercise of sovereignty<sup>88</sup> by the Government of Israel over the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The practices were considered by the International Court of Justice as amounting to annexation and resulting in the prolonged deprivation of the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination, in violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.<sup>89</sup>

48. Despite decades of international monitoring and condemnation, settlement expansion continued rapidly. At the end of May 2025, 22 new settlements were approved for creation, including through the legalization of outposts,<sup>90</sup> representing the largest expansion in decades. As at 20 July 2025, 152 settlements had been officially established and there were 280 outposts.<sup>91</sup>

49. The Commission of Inquiry reported<sup>92</sup> “another form of settlement and annexation”, through “steps to seize, expand and develop for tourism purposes, sites that have Jewish and non-Jewish historical significance” in a way that “excludes Palestinians by both limiting their access to their land and not recognizing their relationship to the land’s heritage and history”. It assessed that Israel was using “cultural heritage as leverage for its territorial claims in the occupied West Bank” as “another method [...] to highlight and perpetuate the narrative of an exclusively

<sup>85</sup> See <https://x.com/IsraeliPM/status/1814322969713271125>.

<sup>86</sup> See [https://x.com/Israel\\_katz/status/1814335332168479176](https://x.com/Israel_katz/status/1814335332168479176).

<sup>87</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/countries/israel](https://www.ohchr.org/en/countries/israel), notably A/79/347, paras. 4–14.

<sup>88</sup> *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*, para. 254.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 170.

<sup>90</sup> See [www.theguardian.com/world/2025/may/29/israel-new-settlements-occupied-west-bank-palestinian-state](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/may/29/israel-new-settlements-occupied-west-bank-palestinian-state).

<sup>91</sup> See the list of settlements and outposts as at 20 July 2025, available at <https://peacenow.org.il/en/settlements-watch/settlements-data/population> (consulted on 29 July 2025).

<sup>92</sup> A/HRC/59/26, paras. 63 and 68.

historical Jewish attachment and affinity to the land, while erasing any other narrative or prior relationships”.

50. On 11 May 2025, the Israeli Security Cabinet decided to resume land registration in Area C of the occupied West Bank,<sup>93</sup> a process previously suspended since 1968. The process involves land ownership investigation and documentation leading to final registration, and applies to all categories of land, not only land that can be declared “State land”. Owing to stringent documentation and other requirements that are almost impossible for Palestinians to meet, it is expected to result in massive land dispossession for the Palestinians in Area C, who upon failing to prove ownership, would see their land then automatically registered as “State land” – paving the way for more settlements. In an official statement of the Ministry of Defence, both the Minister and the Additional Minister praised “a revolutionary decision that does justice to the Jewish settlement enterprise in Judea and Samaria and will lead to its strengthening, consolidation, and expansion”, describing it as “part of the normalization and *de facto* sovereignty revolution” in a plan “to bring in another million settlers”.<sup>94</sup>

51. During the reporting period, draft laws with similar objectives were in various states of progress. In January 2025, the Ministerial Legislation Committee approved a bill on the “Elimination of Discrimination in the Purchase of Real Estate in Judea and Samaria” for tabling at the Knesset, which proceeded to approve it in preliminary reading.<sup>95</sup> The bill is aimed at enabling the direct purchase of land by Israeli settlers in occupied territory, instead of the current system under which only companies registered with the Civil Administration may purchase land (which is itself in violation of the law of occupation). If passed, the bill would lead to an increased amount of West Bank land under Israeli ownership, further entrenching permanent Israeli presence in occupied territory.

52. In February, another bill was tabled, aiming at the creation of a “Jerusalem Metropolitan Area”, which would integrate 14 settlements around occupied East Jerusalem and land in between them and Jerusalem, applying Israeli “law, jurisdiction and administration” to the whole area. Its explanatory note asserts that “a united and complete Jerusalem has been the capital of Israel and the Jewish people for over three thousand years”.<sup>96</sup>

53. In March, a bill on the “Correction of Terms in Legislation (Judea and Samaria)” was approved for the first reading by the Knesset, aiming to replace the use of the term “West Bank” with “Judea and Samaria” in all legislation. According to the Knesset Constitutional Committee, the aim of the bill is to correct a “distorted colonialist perception” that originated during the “period of illegal occupation of the lands by Jordan” and express “the historical right of the Jewish people to their land”, in line with “the general trend of strengthening the Israeli connection to the region”. The Minister for Foreign Affairs expressed his support for the bill, which he saw as a justified measure.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>93</sup> See [www.timesofisrael.com/cabinet-approves-west-bank-land-registration-process-to-strengthen-jewish-settlement/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/cabinet-approves-west-bank-land-registration-process-to-strengthen-jewish-settlement/); and <https://peacenow.org.il/en/state-request-land-registration>.

<sup>94</sup> See <https://peacenow.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/MOD-press-release-on-cabinet-decision-110525.pdf>.

<sup>95</sup> See <https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press30125q.aspx>. See also <https://peacenow.org.il/en/a-bill-that-would-allow-settler-to-buy-land-in-the-west-bank-without-limit>.

<sup>96</sup> See [www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-02-28/ty-article/.premium/step-to-full-sovereignty-law-to-annex-west-bank-settlements-near-jerusalem-set-to-pass/00000195-4c3f-d79a-abfd-fdff5ab10000](https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-02-28/ty-article/.premium/step-to-full-sovereignty-law-to-annex-west-bank-settlements-near-jerusalem-set-to-pass/00000195-4c3f-d79a-abfd-fdff5ab10000); and [https://fs.knesset.gov.il/25/law/25\\_1st\\_1892340.docx](https://fs.knesset.gov.il/25/law/25_1st_1892340.docx).

<sup>97</sup> See <https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press24325e.aspx>.

54. In July, a bill to “prohibit the activity of the Palestinian Authority within the boundaries of the State of Israel” was approved for first reading. The bill proposes, inter alia, to extend to the Palestinian Authority a prohibition on opening and operating missions in East Jerusalem, currently applied to Fatah or the Palestine Liberation Organization, with the explanatory note referring specifically to the Palestinian Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs. The bill would make opening or operating such a mission an offence punishable by 5 to 10 years’ imprisonment, grant the Minister of National Security with powers to implement such prohibition and instruct him to remove from “Israeli territory” any person violating it.<sup>98</sup>

### **Expansionist rhetoric and genocidal incitement**

55. Since 7 October 2023, there has been a ramping-up of racist rhetoric by Israeli leaders as to their settler-colonial aspirations and the territorial expansion of the Israeli State, including through means amounting to the most serious international crimes. Several officials were quoted above, and the following paragraphs contain references to further quotations, however these represent only a fraction of similar statements made by Israeli government ministers, Knesset members, other politicians and public figures during the reporting period. While mainstream Western media in particular often presented such positions as being held by only an extreme fringe in society or two extremist ministers in the coalition,<sup>99</sup> they were expressed far more broadly.

56. Although not official government policy, numerous Israeli government ministers have repeatedly attended and addressed events and gatherings promoting the “resettlement” of Gaza or the expulsion of the local population and have not been called to order. For instance, in October 2024, a conference on “Preparing to resettle Gaza” was held jointly by the Likud party and the extremist Nahala settler movement, in a closed military area near the Gaza border. The participants included the Minister for Internal Security, the Finance Minister and Additional Minister in the Ministry of Defence, the Minister for the Negev and Galilee Development and the Minister for Social Equality and the Advancement of the Status of Women. At the event, the leader of Nahala, Daniela Weiss, called for a “copy-paste” from the West Bank to Gaza. The Minister for Social Equality called to “hit them where it hurts, their land”, suggesting “another Nakba that they will tell their children and their grandchildren about for the next 50 years”.<sup>100</sup>

57. In Gaza, as the repeated evacuation orders issued by the Israel Defense Forces in conditions violating international humanitarian law raised concerns of forcible transfer and ethnic cleansing,<sup>101</sup> many senior Israeli politicians, including ministers, continued to openly call for the “voluntary” emigration of Palestinians to third countries, if not their deportation. In February 2025, during the ceasefire, the Minister of Communications called to completely halt humanitarian aid, cut off electricity,

<sup>98</sup> See <https://main.knesset.gov.il/activity/legislation/laws/pages/lawbill.aspx?t=lawsuggestionssearch&lawitemid=2221806>.

<sup>99</sup> See [www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-partners-unite-to-sanction-ministers-inciting-west-bank-violence](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-partners-unite-to-sanction-ministers-inciting-west-bank-violence).

<sup>100</sup> See <https://x.com/itamarbengvir/status/1848358921146110355>; <https://x.com/bezalelsm/status/1848382140594925712> and [https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-10-21/ty-article-live/israel-reportedly-strikes-beirut-after-idf-warns-of-attacks-on-hezbollah-economic-assets/00000192-acd0-d049-a3db-bff6ed0d0000?liveBlogItemId=992052909&utm\\_source=site&utm\\_medium=button&utm\\_campaign=live\\_blog\\_item#992052909](https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-10-21/ty-article-live/israel-reportedly-strikes-beirut-after-idf-warns-of-attacks-on-hezbollah-economic-assets/00000192-acd0-d049-a3db-bff6ed0d0000?liveBlogItemId=992052909&utm_source=site&utm_medium=button&utm_campaign=live_blog_item#992052909); <https://www.972mag.com/gaza-israeli-resettlement-event-sukkot/>.

<sup>101</sup> See <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/02/1159821>; [www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2025/04/gaza-increasing-israeli-evacuation-orders-lead-forcible-transfer](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2025/04/gaza-increasing-israeli-evacuation-orders-lead-forcible-transfer); and [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/05/turk-deplores-gaza-escalation-pleads-global-action-stop-more-killings](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/05/turk-deplores-gaza-escalation-pleads-global-action-stop-more-killings).

water, and communication, use “cruel and disproportionate force until the hostages return [and] cleanse Gaza of all the ‘uninvolved’”, insisting that “the migration plan must start immediately”.<sup>102</sup> Shortly afterwards, he emphasized the “historic opportunity in which the US President supports eliminating Hamas and the deportation of Gazans. [...] Occupy, deport, settle, bring total victory, God willing.”<sup>103</sup> The Minister of Environmental Protection added: “encouraging emigration is the solution. The only solution for Gaza is to empty Gaza of Gazans... [We must] inherit in Gaza, in Jenin, Nablus, the answer to terrorism is sovereignty and inheriting the land.”<sup>104</sup>

58. In March, the Minister of Defence announced the establishment of a “Voluntary Emigration Bureau for Gaza residents interested in relocating to third countries” within his Ministry, mandated to “prepare for and facilitate the safe and supervised passage of Gazans for voluntary exit to third-party countries”.<sup>105</sup> In May, the Prime Minister asserted that victory in Gaza would involve the whole territory being under Israeli control and carrying out the plan of the President of the United States, which he declared to be “so correct and so revolutionary”, as a condition for ending the conflict.<sup>106</sup>

59. In July, announcing his plan for a “humanitarian city” in Rafah, the Minister of Defence insisted that “the emigration plan will happen”.<sup>107</sup> The Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology issued her own video of a “new Riviera in Gaza”, endorsing “voluntary migration” under the slogan “It’s us or them!”.<sup>108</sup> On the same day, at a Knesset conference entitled “Gaza Riviera, from vision to reality” and attended by parliamentarians and government ministers, a settlement plan for Gaza presented to the participants foresaw, inter alia, the settlement of over 1 million Jews in Gaza and the construction of 300,000 housing units, while the Gaza population, who “lost its legitimacy to remain after 7 October” would be “expulsed, by choice and/or as part of an arrangement”. The Finance Minister and Additional Minister in the Ministry of Defence called for the “security annexation” of the Strip, describing it as an “inseparable part of Israel”.<sup>109</sup>

60. Regarding the West Bank, in April 2025, the Minister of Defence declared, in a joint video statement with the Additional Minister in his Ministry, that “the State of Israel will not abandon the security of the settlers ... and will prevent any attempt by the Palestinian Authority to take over the territories of Judea and Samaria and harm Jewish settlement”.<sup>110</sup> This builds upon weapons and other equipment supplied by the Government of Israel to settlers.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>102</sup> See [https://x.com/shlomo\\_karhi/status/1889259733200052579](https://x.com/shlomo_karhi/status/1889259733200052579).

<sup>103</sup> See [www.timesofisrael.com/senior-ministers-call-for-resettling-gaza-expelling-palestinians-return-to-war/](http://www.timesofisrael.com/senior-ministers-call-for-resettling-gaza-expelling-palestinians-return-to-war/).

<sup>104</sup> See [www.timesofisrael.com/occupy-expel-settle-minister-mks-at-far-right-rally-call-to-empty-gaza-of-gazans/](http://www.timesofisrael.com/occupy-expel-settle-minister-mks-at-far-right-rally-call-to-empty-gaza-of-gazans/).

<sup>105</sup> See [www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-03-23/ty-article/.premium/israeli-government-approves-bureau-for-voluntary-emigration-of-palestinians-from-gaza/00000195-c2ed-dcee-a7b7-ffdc83c0000](http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-03-23/ty-article/.premium/israeli-government-approves-bureau-for-voluntary-emigration-of-palestinians-from-gaza/00000195-c2ed-dcee-a7b7-ffdc83c0000).

<sup>106</sup> See [www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-implementation-of-trumps-gaza-relocation-plan-is-condition-for-ending-war/](http://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-implementation-of-trumps-gaza-relocation-plan-is-condition-for-ending-war/).

<sup>107</sup> See [www.jurist.org/features/2025/07/17/explainer-what-we-know-about-israels-proposed-gaza-relocation-plan/](http://www.jurist.org/features/2025/07/17/explainer-what-we-know-about-israels-proposed-gaza-relocation-plan/).

<sup>108</sup> See <https://x.com/GilaGamliel/status/1947629456127869012>.

<sup>109</sup> See <https://x.com/BtSIsrael/status/1947655466948935852>; <https://x.com/DaphnaLiel/status/1947658076837834897>; and [www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2025/07/24/israeli-government-openly-aims-to-depopulate-gaza\\_6743692\\_4.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2025/07/24/israeli-government-openly-aims-to-depopulate-gaza_6743692_4.html).

<sup>110</sup> See <https://x.com/bezalesm/status/1907041203058815384>.

<sup>111</sup> See <https://x.com/itamarbengvir/status/1843146985479524370>; and [www.timesofisrael.com/government-gifts-state-financed-atvs-to-illegal-settlement-outposts/](http://www.timesofisrael.com/government-gifts-state-financed-atvs-to-illegal-settlement-outposts/).

61. In May, in yet another joint statement with the Finance Minister and Additional Minister in the Ministry of Defence, the Minister of Defence announced the approval of 22 new settlements in the West Bank, praising it as a “historic decision” that would “strengthen our hold on Judea and Samaria, anchoring our historic right in the Land of Israel”.<sup>112</sup> Speaking at a settlement conference the same month, the Finance Minister and Additional Minister further asserted that the Government would soon approve construction of the E1 project (which would divide the West Bank horizontally), adding: “this is how you kill the Palestinian state de facto. God willing, there will be Israeli sovereignty in the West Bank during this term”.<sup>113</sup> At the same conference, Benny Gantz, former Minister and War Cabinet member from 11 October 2023 to 9 June 2024, stated that “anyone who talks about a Palestinian state or withdrawals [was] simply detached from the security reality”.<sup>114</sup>

62. On 2 July, 14 ministers and the Speaker of the Knesset, all from the Likud party, sent a letter to the Prime Minister, calling upon the Government “to apply Israeli sovereignty and law over Judea and Samaria, immediately...” before the end of the Knesset summer session. Sharing the letter, the Finance Minister and Additional Minister of the Ministry of Defence commented: “The true answer to those who plot against the State of Israel is sovereignty. I congratulate the Likud ministers and pledge to the Prime Minister that on the day you give the order, the Settlement Administration under my leadership is practically ready to implement sovereignty immediately.”<sup>115</sup>

63. While the international community prepared to join a high-level conference on Palestine at the General Assembly,<sup>116</sup> the Knesset adopted on 23 July a non-binding motion calling for the annexation of the West Bank. In the document, the Knesset declared the West Bank to be “an inseparable part of the Land of Israel” and stressed “Israel has the natural, historical and legal right to all of the territories of the Land of Israel”.<sup>117</sup>

## B. Presence of Israel in the Syrian Arab Republic

64. As reported in section IV, Israel has continued to transfer its civilian population to the occupied Syrian Golan in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War<sup>118</sup> and established a military presence further into Syrian territory, negatively affecting the human rights of the local Arab populations. On 17 April 2025, the Israeli Minister of Defence declared that “Israeli forces will remain in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, and Syria indefinitely to maintain security zones along the borders.”<sup>119</sup>

65. In mid-July 2025, killings and other gross human rights violations and abuses were perpetrated in the Syrian southern city of Suwayda’, outside the occupied Syrian Golan, reportedly by “members of the security forces and individuals affiliated with

<sup>112</sup> See [www.timesofisrael.com/defense-ministry-confirms-government-approval-of-22-new-west-bank-settlements/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/defense-ministry-confirms-government-approval-of-22-new-west-bank-settlements/).

<sup>113</sup> See [www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-05-06/ty-article/.premium/smotrich-says-govt-set-to-approve-construction-plans-that-would-divide-west-bank-in-half/00000196-a67e-d9bf-a1b6-ef67780000](https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-05-06/ty-article/.premium/smotrich-says-govt-set-to-approve-construction-plans-that-would-divide-west-bank-in-half/00000196-a67e-d9bf-a1b6-ef67780000).

<sup>114</sup> See [www.timesofisrael.com/gantz-says-israels-full-withdrawal-from-gaza-in-2005-was-a-mistake/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/gantz-says-israels-full-withdrawal-from-gaza-in-2005-was-a-mistake/).

<sup>115</sup> See <https://x.com/bezaletsm/status/1940460076843913546>.

<sup>116</sup> See <https://press.un.org/en/2025/pal2250.doc.htm>.

<sup>117</sup> See [www.timesofisrael.com/knesset-votes-71-13-for-non-binding-motion-calling-to-annex-west-bank/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/knesset-votes-71-13-for-non-binding-motion-calling-to-annex-west-bank/).

<sup>118</sup> See <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gciv-1949/article-49>.

<sup>119</sup> See <https://nypost.com/2025/04/17/world-news/israel-will-remain-in-gaza-lebanon-and-syria-indefinitely-defense-minister-says/>.

the [Syrian] interim authorities, as well as other armed elements from the area, including Druze and Bedouins".<sup>120</sup> Concomitantly, Israel struck the headquarters of the Syrian Defence Ministry in central Damascus and launched dozens of air strikes against Syrian government forces in Suwayda'. In a video briefing, the Prime Minister of Israel stated that the Israel Defense Forces had intervened to protect the Druze community and because the Syrian forces had allegedly "broken the rule" – unilaterally declared by the Government of Israel – of "demilitarization of the region to south of Damascus, from the Golan Heights and to the Druze Mountain area".<sup>121</sup>

66. In addition to condemning the atrocities committed in Suwayda', the Special Committee is concerned that Israel may try to undermine the Syrian interim authorities and incite division and hatred among Syrians. The Special Committee deplores the policies of racial discrimination implemented by the Government of Israel in the occupied Syrian Golan and is particularly concerned at the prospect of a permanent occupation of the buffer zone and newly controlled territory in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Special Committee stresses that any peace agreement between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic must respect the rights of the population living in the Syrian Golan occupied since 1967 and in the recently occupied area.<sup>122</sup>

### C. Presence of Israel in Lebanon

67. Israel has maintained a continued military presence in southern Lebanon since 1 October 2024. That day, it launched a ground offensive into southern Lebanon, in the wake of terror attacks that killed or injured hundreds of civilians across Lebanon, including children.<sup>123</sup> Between late September and November 2024, Israel conducted large-scale air strikes, which continued beyond the end of the reporting period, albeit at a lower intensity, despite a cessation of hostilities agreed between Israel and Lebanon on 27 November 2024. According to the Ministry of Public Health of Lebanon, as at 20 June 2025, more than 4,330 people, including women, children, medical workers and journalists, had been killed and over 17,700 others had been injured in Israeli military operations.<sup>124</sup> Over the year 2024 as a whole, the United Nations verified the killing and maiming of 541 children by Israeli forces,<sup>125</sup> and the highest numbers of medical workers killed and injured in armed conflict were in Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.<sup>126</sup>

68. With its seemingly indiscriminate strikes on densely populated areas and short-notice advance warnings to evacuate, the warfare waged by Israel in Lebanon appeared to mirror that in Gaza. In December 2024, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed high concern about the impact of the actions of Israel in Lebanon, and urged all parties to respect the cessation of hostilities agreement.<sup>127</sup> In February 2025, special procedure mandate holders called upon Israel

<sup>120</sup> See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/07/turk-calls-immediate-steps-ensure-protection-people-suweida-and-across-syria>.

<sup>121</sup> See <https://x.com/IsraeliPM/status/1945856798201717082>.

<sup>122</sup> See [www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/report-syria-not-demanding-golan-heights-as-part-of-deal-with-israel/](http://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/report-syria-not-demanding-golan-heights-as-part-of-deal-with-israel/).

<sup>123</sup> See <https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahus-office-confirms-israel-was-behind-devastating-pager-attacks-on-hezbollah/>; <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2584016/middle-east>; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/09/disrespect-for-international-law-a-matter-of-international-peace-and-security-hc>; <https://fb.watch/B9ZdkEzj8z/>; and [https://www.instagram.com/p/DIyZnkLC5R0/?img\\_index=10](https://www.instagram.com/p/DIyZnkLC5R0/?img_index=10).

<sup>124</sup> See <https://moph.gov.lb/ar/Pages/127/77347/>.

<sup>125</sup> Mostly through the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (A/79/878-S/2025/247, para. 116).

<sup>126</sup> S/2025/271, para. 19.

<sup>127</sup> See [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCERD%2FEWU%2F10086&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCERD%2FEWU%2F10086&Lang=en).

to “stop killing civilians returning to their homes in South Lebanon” and “urgently call[ed] for an immediate and complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied territories in Lebanon and for an end to all ceasefire violations”.<sup>128</sup> As at the end of May, 82,700 people remained displaced, while over 980,000 returnees faced damaged or destroyed homes and infrastructure and lack of basic services.<sup>129</sup>

69. Even though it was stipulated in the cessation of hostilities agreement that Israel must fully withdraw from Lebanon by 26 January 2025, which was subsequently extended to 18 February 2025, at the end of the reporting period Israeli troops remained posted in five southern locations.<sup>130</sup> In December 2024, Israeli settlers of the Uri Tzafon movement attempted to establish an outpost in southern Lebanon.<sup>131</sup> The movement, which purports to “reawaken the consciousness of Lebanon as part of the Land of Israel”, promotes Jewish settlements in southern Lebanon and, in the wake of the pager attacks, advertised real estate sales in Lebanon for Israeli reservists.<sup>132</sup> Contrary to patterns in the occupied West Bank, Israeli forces prevented them from establishing an outpost. However, other violations continued, including the killing of civilians in Israeli operations. According to data verified and confirmed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), as at 31 July 2025, at least 88 civilians, including 20 women and 12 children, had been killed in Israeli operations since 27 November 2024, the vast majority in southern Lebanon.<sup>133</sup> On several occasions, the Minister of Defence of Israel declared that troops would remain in southern Lebanon “indefinitely”, stating his intention “to protect the residents of the north [of Israel], regardless of any future negotiations over disputed border points”.<sup>134</sup> On 30 July 2025, the Finance Minister and Additional Minister of the Ministry of Defence reiterated emphatically that the Israel Defense Forces would not withdraw from the five locations, adding that the Lebanese villages that had been destroyed by Israel would not be rebuilt.<sup>135</sup>

70. The Special Committee concludes that Israel has adopted a deliberate strategy to expand its territorial presence or control in areas commonly identified as belonging to “Greater Israel” by the proponents of that vision. It also notes that many Israeli ministers often referred to “true Zionist answers” and other rationale well beyond national defence and security. Its concerns have been amplified in the light of repeated mentions of “historical rights” to the “Land of Israel” rather than a focus on the State of Israel. The Special Committee recalls that, since its establishment, Israel has consistently created facts on the ground, and warns of the impact on the human rights of the Palestinians and other Arabs in all the areas mentioned above, should Israel continue to maintain a presence there.

## D. Recognition of the State of Palestine

71. With the horrors in Gaza and the blatant rejection by the Government of Israel of the Palestinians’ right to self-determination, the recognition of a Palestinian State

<sup>128</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/02/israel-must-stop-killing-civilians-returning-their-homes-south-lebanon-un](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/02/israel-must-stop-killing-civilians-returning-their-homes-south-lebanon-un).

<sup>129</sup> See [www.who.int/publications/m/item/public-health-situation-analysis---lebanon](https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/public-health-situation-analysis---lebanon).

<sup>130</sup> See [www.newarab.com/news/dead-zone-why-israel-occupying-five-positions-lebanon](https://www.newarab.com/news/dead-zone-why-israel-occupying-five-positions-lebanon).

<sup>131</sup> See [www.timesofisrael.com/idf-admits-settler-group-crossed-northern-border-into-lebanon-this-month/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-admits-settler-group-crossed-northern-border-into-lebanon-this-month/).

<sup>132</sup> See <https://uritsafon.com>.

<sup>133</sup> On file.

<sup>134</sup> See [www.jns.org/idf-to-remain-at-five-lebanon-outposts-indefinitely-katz-says/](https://www.jns.org/idf-to-remain-at-five-lebanon-outposts-indefinitely-katz-says/); and [www.timesofisrael.com/in-lebanon-katz-says-troops-to-stay-without-time-limit-to-defend-border-communities/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-lebanon-katz-says-troops-to-stay-without-time-limit-to-defend-border-communities/).

<sup>135</sup> See <https://x.com/bezalelsm/status/1950549947750695285>.

gathered momentum. As at 31 July 2025, a total of 147 Member States had officially recognized the State of Palestine, with The Bahamas, Barbados, Ireland, Jamaica, Norway, Spain and Trinidad and Tobago joining in 2024.

72. The Special Committee welcomes the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, adopted on 29 July 2025,<sup>136</sup> and the announcements by the President of France and the Prime Ministers of Canada and Malta that their countries will formally recognize the State of Palestine in September.<sup>137</sup> The Special Committee observes again that, in reaction, the Defence Minister of Israel reiterated opposition to “the establishment of a Palestinian entity that would harm our security, endanger our existence, and undermine our historical right to the Land of Israel.”<sup>138</sup>

73. While welcoming the expressions of support for the realization of the right of Palestinian people to self-determination, the Special Committee stresses the urgency of ending the genocide and starvation in Gaza, and stopping the killings of Palestinians across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, practices amounting to annexation and the prolonged denial of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. This requires concrete actions to stop the Government of Israel in its destruction of the Palestinian people and society. In that respect, the Special Committee echoes the call of the Hague Group at its emergency meeting, held in July 2025, to move beyond words to collective action grounded in international law. The Special Committee lauds the concrete measures to which 13 of the participating States committed.<sup>139</sup>

## VI. Conclusions and recommendations

74. **The ongoing genocide in Gaza and widespread ethnic cleansing in the Occupied Palestinian Territory more broadly are a historic tragedy fuelled by racist, discriminatory policies and practices and the abhorrent dehumanization of the Palestinians. The unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Gaza is not a by-product of conflict, but of conditions deliberately imposed by Israel.**

75. **After failing to prevent the Nakbah in 1947–1948 and letting the State of Israel risk the erasure of the indigenous Palestinian population with impunity ever since, the world must urgently and decisively change course. Failing to do so would not only risk the complete annihilation of the Palestinians in Gaza and the disintegration of any hope of meaningful realization of the Palestinians’ right to self-determination, it would also vindicate the proponents, in Israel and beyond, of “might as right” and those who claim that some are lesser humans and less deserving of rights. This would be the death knell for the system of international law protecting civilians in conflict and inalienable human rights.**

76. **As a first step in advancing justice and equal rights for Palestinians and Israelis, the unlawful occupation of Palestinian territory by Israel must end. Ensuring peace in the broader Middle East region also requires that the leaders of Israel cease claiming rights to a geographically undefined “Land of Israel”, a term that is polysemic in nature for a territory that has no existence in international law. The peace, security and human rights that people in Israel**

<sup>136</sup> A/CONF.243/2025/1, annex.

<sup>137</sup> See <https://x.com/EmmanuelMacron/status/1948482142356603089>; <https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/159784>; and [www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/statements/2025/07/30/statement-prime-minister-carney-canadas-recognition-palestinian-state](https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/statements/2025/07/30/statement-prime-minister-carney-canadas-recognition-palestinian-state).

<sup>138</sup> See [https://x.com/Israel\\_katz/status/1948477720674877906](https://x.com/Israel_katz/status/1948477720674877906).

<sup>139</sup> See <https://thehaguegroup.org/meetings-bogota-en/>.

deserve as much as anyone anywhere else will not be secured by occupation or annexation of Palestinian territory and the Syrian Golan, nor by an unlimited, indefinite or permanent occupation of more parts of the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon and violations of the human rights of their inhabitants.

77. The Special Committee reiterates its recommendations from previous reports.<sup>140</sup> In addition, further to the observations and concerns formulated above, the Special Committee makes the recommendations set out below.

78. The State of Israel should:

(a) Immediately allow unhindered humanitarian assistance at scale to all those in need in Gaza, relying on organizations that comply with the fundamental humanitarian principles;

(b) Immediately stop all violations in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, end its unlawful occupation as rapidly as possible, and ensure accountability for the perpetrators and redress for the victims;

(c) Respect the cessation of hostilities agreement of 2024 in Lebanon and the Disengagement Agreement of 1974 in the Syrian Arab Republic;

(d) Repeal the two laws on UNRWA and cease its attacks on humanitarian workers, including United Nations personnel and entities, as well as medical staff;

(e) Review the “Basic Law: Israel – The Nation-State of the Jewish People” of 2018 to bring it into compliance with international law;

(f) Repeal the regulations on international NGO registration and visas.

79. The General Assembly and Member States should urgently consider:

(a) Imposing sanctions and a full arms embargo so that Israel stops its assault against the Palestinians, accepts a ceasefire and fully withdraws from the Occupied Palestinian Territory in line with the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice on 19 July 2024;

(b) Implementing the measures referred to in the joint statement on the conclusion of the emergency conference on Palestine convened by the Hague Group;

(c) Examining the proposals presented by the Secretary-General at the request of the General Assembly in his report (A/79/588, paras. 17 and 18) and continue to urgently consider ways to advance accountability;

(d) Fully cooperating with the International Criminal Court and making full use of universal jurisdiction;

(e) Investigating and prosecuting national corporate entities and dual citizens involved in crimes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including soldiers, mercenaries and settlers, and considering appropriate actions for other entities and individuals not liable under criminal law but otherwise violating international law;

(f) Providing adequate support to UNRWA, politically and financially, and ensuring the Palestine refugees’ right of return;

<sup>140</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/countries/palestine/special-committee-reports](http://www.ohchr.org/en/countries/palestine/special-committee-reports).

(g) Formally recognizing the State of Palestine without additional conditions, considering that the General Assembly had already voted on the establishment of two independent States, resulting in its resolution [181 \(II\)](#);

(h) Mandating OHCHR to include all business enterprises involved in or profiting from the occupation by Israel of Palestinian and Syrian territories in the database established pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions [31/36](#) and [53/25](#);

(i) Using the significant political and economic influence of the regional groups to apply stronger leverage.

80. In addition, the Special Committee recommends that:

(a) Technology companies should immediately review their provision of cloud and other infrastructure support to the Israeli military;

(b) Traditional and social media companies should implement policies that reduce bias and limit access to extremists and propagandists;

(c) The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development should consider removing Israel as a member until it ends the occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories;

(d) Business enterprises should consider forthwith ending all economic support for and activity with Israel until it ends the occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories.

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