

## Palestine's Legal Scene

Your weekly survey of the most important publications and activities related to Palestine, from local and international sources

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Prepared by: Nour Kharouf, Joman Al Khateeb, Arwa Abdel moniam

Translation: Sundus Al-Fararja and Mai Shaheen

Editing: Nardeen Khalid

This weekly report reviews the legal dynamics of the Palestine question, and everything related to international law and Palestine. The report includes an account of the most important publications, activities, and conferences related to Palestine at the local, regional, international levels. The report further covers decisions, decrees, and judicial orders affecting the Palestinian cause, whether made at the official, academic or public levels. The report aims to be a reference for monitoring, documenting, and archiving the latest human rights developments related to Palestine, and to present them to individuals, researchers, study centers, and official, academic, and legal institutions concerned.

### Judicial decrees, decisions, positions, and orders issued by official Palestinian bodies

- The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates (MOFAE) [says](#) that Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech, outlining his intention to expand the genocide war and invade Rafah and its vicinity, should increase the world's determination and courage to stop the war in all its forms. Such action is crucial for upholding international law, maintaining the credibility of the United Nations, and safeguarding fundamental human principles. The ministry has [called](#) for the necessity of opening all crossings and ensuring the continuous flow of aid by land, sea, and air. It [holds](#) the Israeli government fully and

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directly responsible for the lives of medical personnel, ambulance crews, patients, and displaced individuals present in the Al-Shifa Medical Complex and its vicinity.

- The Palestinian MOFAE has urged for the development of sanctions imposed by several states on various random outputs used as hubs for terrorism, as well as on extremist settlers. It demands the implementation of output sanctions targeting the colonial settlement enterprise, compelling the occupying state to halt and stop its settlement activities, dismantle settler militias, disarm them, sever their sources of funding, and remove their political and legal protection. (March 18, 2024) For further details, click [here](#)

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### **Judicial decrees, decisions, positions, and orders issued by official Israeli bodies**

- Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterates that Israel will operate in Rafah, and it will not succumb to any international pressures or concerns about the safety of more than a million Palestinians seeking shelter there. Netanyahu stressed Israel's refusal to stop the war before all of its goals are achieved. (March 17, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)
- The Israeli Minister of Strategic Affairs, Ron Dermer, confirmed that the Israeli army will enter Rafah even if it comes at the cost of harming relations with the United States. The minister added: "It's gonna happen. And it will happen even if Israel is forced to fight alone, even if the entire world turns on Israel, including the United States." (March 20, 2024). For further details, click [here/here](#)
- The Israeli government declared the appropriation of some 8,000 dunums of Jordan Valley land and declared it state land. This decision allows Israel to construct hundreds of settlement housing units, as well as areas designated for industry and commerce purposes. Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich supervised this step and said that declaring ownership of the land to the state is, "an important and strategic issue." [Peace Now Organization](#) said, "It's the largest since the Oslo Accords, with 2024 setting a record." (March 22, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)

### Judicial decrees, decisions, positions, and orders issued by Arab, European, and international bodies

- The Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs [condemned](#) the ongoing Israeli attacks on vulnerable Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip. It demanded Israel to immediately cease its policies of collective punishment against the population of the Gaza Strip. It reiterated its warning against the dangers of carrying out any military operation in the city of Rafah, considering such action, despite international rejection, a disregard for the lives of innocent civilians and a serious violation of international law. Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry also [affirmed](#) Egypt's full support for the continuation of UNRWA's work and emphasized the necessity of removing the obstacles imposed by Israel on the entry of aid, as well as halting the policies of starvation.
- The EU leaders [urged](#) an "immediate humanitarian pause" in Gaza. During her visit to Cairo, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen [said](#) that "Gaza is facing famine and we cannot accept that," and called for a "rapid" ceasefire, leading to the release of the hostages and allowing more humanitarian aid to reach Gaza. For his part, the Egyptian President [said](#) that Egypt and European leaders stand against the Israeli army operation in Rafah. The Egyptian President stressed his rejection of any attempts to forcibly displace Palestinians, and stressed the importance of the international community assuming its responsibilities in resolving the Palestinian cause and implementing the two-state solution in accordance with international resolutions.
- During his meeting with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, King of Jordan Abdullah II called for urgent measures to achieve an immediate and lasting ceasefire in Gaza. He stressed the need to step up efforts to protect civilians in Gaza and ensure the adequate and sustainable delivery of humanitarian aid through all possible means. Additionally, he reiterated Jordan's complete rejection of any attempts to displace the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. (March 17, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)

- The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) warned that the people in Gaza are “on the verge of famine,” stressing that safe and sustainable access to aid in all parts of the region has become “a matter of life or death.” The UN agency added that, “UNRWA needs to be able to reach as many people as possible with critical aid. Delivery via land remains the most efficient and safest way.” (March 17, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)
- The European Union’s Foreign Policy Chief, Josep Borrell, and Crisis Management Commissioner, Janez Lenarčič, affirmed that Gaza is already facing “famine,” with 100% of people estimated to be acutely food insecure and that 70% of the population are facing imminent famine. They added that, “hunger cannot be used as a weapon in war. What we are seeing is not a natural hazard but a manmade disaster, and it is our moral duty to stop it.” They urged Israel to allow free, unimpeded, and safe humanitarian access to all people in need and to cooperate with UNRWA and other UN agencies. (March 18, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)
- Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), stressed that hospitals should never be battlegrounds, and expressed his terrible worries about the situation at Al-Shifa Hospital in northern Gaza. He called for the protection of hospitals and a ceasefire. (March 18, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)
- [The Canadian Parliament](#) passed a motion titled “Canada’s actions to promote peace in the Middle East.” It calls for an immediate ceasefire and hostage release, halting arms exports to Israel, and combating illegal arms trade. The motion also stresses continued UNRWA funding for Gaza’s humanitarian needs and sanctions against extremist settlers. [Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Joly](#) confirmed no new arms exports to Israel since January 8, pending compliance with Canadian law. (March 18, 2024)

- António Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, affirmed that the latest report on food insecurity in Gaza is an appalling indictment of conditions on the ground for civilians. The world’s leading experts on food insecurity clearly document that famine in the northern part of Gaza is imminent. More than half of all Palestinians in Gaza –1.1 million people– have completely exhausted their food supplies and are facing catastrophic hunger. Guterres called on Israeli authorities to ensure complete and unfettered access to humanitarian goods in Gaza and stressed the immediate need to “prevent the unthinkable, unacceptable, and unjustifiable.” (March 18, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)
- A report issued by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Partnership warned that famine in Gaza is imminent with immediate and long-term health consequences. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the WHO, emphasized the worsening situation faced by the population of Gaza, pointing to increasing cases of hunger, death, and disease due to food shortages and humanitarian aid deficiencies. The report underscored the necessity of opening crossings and facilitating the entry of food and medical supplies. (March 18, 2024) .For further details , click [here](#)
- [US State Department spokesman Vedant Patel](#) and [European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell](#) call on the Israeli authorities to allow the Commissioner General Philippe Lazzarini and UN staff to visit UNRWA’s fields of operation, including in Gaza. They stressed the importance of promptly approving all requested visas for UN and NGO personnel.
- EU foreign ministers have tentatively agreed to impose sanctions on Israeli settlers for their attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank, as well as to add further sanctions on members of the Palestinian Islamic movement, Hamas. Josep Borrell, the EU's foreign policy coordinator, said, “A solid compromise has been agreed at the working level and I hope this will continue until full adoption soon.” [The EU will impose the additional](#) Hamas sanctions before sanctioning the Israeli settlers, diplomats said. That sequencing was important for EU members close to Israel, such as Germany, Austria, and the Czech

Republic, which wanted to make clear they were not equating the two groups. (March 18, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)

- UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini said that the Israeli authorities are preventing him from entering Gaza, where he intended to coordinate and improve the humanitarian response, in light of the impending famine in the northern Gaza Strip. He emphasized that more than half of the population have completely exhausted food supplies and coping capacities stressing that, “famine can be averted with political will.” (March 18, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)
- Volker Türk, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, emphasized the necessity of preventing the imminent famine expected in Gaza. He stated that the situation of hunger, starvation, and famine is a result of Israel’s extensive restrictions on the entry and distribution of humanitarian aid and commercial goods, displacement of most of the population, as well as the destruction of crucial civilian infrastructure. He called on Israel, as the occupying power, to ensure the provision of food and medical care to the population in a safe and dignified manner. He stressed the immediate need for a ceasefire and the release of hostages in Gaza. (March 19, 2024). for further details, click [here](#)
- The Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has adopted a resolution calling for the assessment of the damage to schools, educational facilities, historical landmarks, and religious sites in the Gaza Strip. The Board also stressed the need to continue efforts in strengthening educational and cultural institutions, ensuring the safety of journalists, and urging UNESCO to implement an action plan for an urgent assistance program in the Gaza Strip. (March 19, 2024). for further details, click [here](#)
- Humanitarian workers [affiliated](#) with the United Nations have confirmed the increasing amounts of starvation, stating that newborns in the Gaza Strip “are simply dying because they (are) too low birth weight.” A spokesperson for the WHO stated, “Increasingly, we’re seeing children that are at the brink of death that need refeeding.” It was also [reported](#) that

less than half of the UN aid convoys scheduled for northern Gaza, which is suffering from famine, have arrived so far this month. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)) stated that during the first two weeks of March, only 11 out of 24 humanitarian missions were “facilitated” by Israeli authorities.

- The independent review group evaluating UNRWA’s neutrality intends to formally submit its interim report to the Secretary-General. It acknowledges UNRWA’s implementation of numerous mechanisms and procedures to uphold the Humanitarian Principle of neutrality while identifying key areas requiring attention. The group pointed out that they will develop concrete and realistic recommendations on how to address these critical areas to strengthen and improve UNRWA and present the final report publicly on April 20. (March 20, 2024). For further details, click [here](#).
- Saudi Arabia’s King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief) announced its provision of US\$ 40 million in support of the UNRWA’S life saving operations in the Gaza Strip. (March 20, 2024). For further details, click [here](#).
- UN Secretary-General António Guterres [stated](#) that Palestinians in Gaza are experiencing alarming levels of hunger and suffering. He emphasized that “this is the highest number of people facing catastrophic hunger ever recorded by the Integrated Food Security Classification system –anywhere, anytim”. Guterres added that “this is an entirely man-made disaster—and the report makes clear that it can be halted”. The head of the WHO [urges](#) the Israeli authorities to ensure complete and unfettered access for humanitarian goods throughout Gaza and urges the international community to fully support humanitarian efforts. He stressed that 1.1 million Gazans are now enduring catastrophic hunger and starvation, with famine possible in the north. (March 20, 2024).
- Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization convened a meeting to discuss recent developments in Palestine. Participants urged an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and emphasized the importance of protecting civilians and the removal of aid entry restrictions. The meeting also stressed the

importance for progress towards a two-state solution and recognition of Palestine. (March 21, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)

- The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child urged an immediate ceasefire, highlighting the looming famine threatening children in Gaza and severe food insecurity in North Gaza. They emphasized the dire situation, stating that children are starving to death and lack access to even basic food. The Committee called on all parties, including the General Assembly and the Security Council, to implement a humanitarian ceasefire to protect innocent children's lives. They also urged states to increase funding for UNRWA, open multiple land border crossings to facilitate aid delivery, and ensure security guarantees for aid passage to all children in need. (March 21, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)
- In a joint Statement on Australia-UK Ministerial Consultations, Ministers expressed deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian crisis in Gaza. They unequivocally condemned the 7 October 2023 Hamas attacks on Israel as abhorrent acts of terror against innocent civilians. They stressed that all parties must act within international humanitarian law and reiterated their calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages and the protection of civilians at all times. Ministers called on Israel to allow immediate, safe, unimpeded and increased humanitarian relief to reach Palestinians in Gaza. Ministers also recognised the vital role of UNRWA. (March 22, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)
- The European High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell said that, "there are no words to depict the situation in Gaza" and that what is happening to the population there is "failure of humanity." Borrell added, what is happening "is not an earthquake; it is not a flood: it is bombing. The only way of stopping this humanitarian crisis - human crisis - is Israel respecting the civilians more and allowing more support to enter into Gaza." (March 21, 2024) For further, click [here](#)
- The US Congress passed a bill with a one-year ban on UNRWA funding. On the other hand, Congress approved \$3.8 billion that the US sends to Israel every year. The bill also contains a long-standing provision that would limit aid to the Palestinian Authority, if it initiates an

International Criminal Court (ICC) judicially authorized investigation, or actively supports such an investigation, that subjects Israeli nationals to an investigation for alleged crimes against Palestinians. (March 22, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)

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- The UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory, Francesca Albanese, said that, “the colossal amount of evidence concerning International crimes committed by Israel in Gaza just over the past 6 months could keep the International Criminal Court (ICC) busy for the next five decades, especially at the current proceedings pace.” (March 22, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)
- The Prime Ministers of Ireland, Malta, Slovenia and Spain confirmed their readiness to recognise the Palestinian State when conditions are appropriate and circumstances can contribute to the successful peace process. In their joint statement, they agreed on the need for an immediate ceasefire, release of hostages and increase of humanitarian aid into Gaza. (March 22, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)
- The Russian Federation and China used their veto power over a US draft resolution in the Security Council, which called for an immediate and sustained ceasefire in Gaza and the release of all Hamas hostages. Russia described the American draft resolution as an attempt to grant Israel more time and criticized it for not contributing to the achievement of an immediate ceasefire. (March 22, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)
- The UN Secretary-General António Guterres visited the Egyptian border with Gaza to renew appeals for a humanitarian ceasefire that could ease the burden of the war in the war-ravaged Strip. Guterres described blocking aid to Gaza as morally outrageous, and stressed that the time has come for Israel to make an “ironclad commitment” for unfettered access to humanitarian goods throughout Gaza. (March 23, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)

### Publications of human rights NGOs

- According to a report by "B'Tselem," Israel has intensified efforts to displace Palestinian shepherding communities in the northern Jordan Valley since the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023. This involves reducing grazing areas, obstructing water supply, and implementing

policies that isolate the Jordan Valley from the rest of the West Bank. Additionally, the area has been designated for military use or settlements, hindering residents' ability to build homes legally and access essential water and electricity infrastructure. The military and police provide full support and protection for these actions. (March 17, 2024). For further information, click [here](#)

- The Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor highlighted the systematic Israeli targeting of programmers, information technology experts, artificial intelligence experts, and workers in computer engineering, alongside the destruction of their companies' headquarters, as part of the ongoing crime of genocide in the Gaza Strip since 7 October 2023. It stressed that these crimes appear to be part of Israel's public policies aimed at making the Gaza Strip uninhabitable by destroying fundamental life structures and eliminating talent. (March 17, 2024). For further information, click [here](#).
- Oxfam Australia has affirmed that Israel persists in obstructing aid efforts to Gaza, despite the ruling of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the grave humanitarian crisis. Oxfam urges for prompt actions to avert widespread fatalities from disease and starvation in Gaza, and insists on lifting the blockade enforced on the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, it demands an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, the release of civilian hostages, and the secure return of displaced Palestinians to their homes. Oxfam also implores other nations to employ all diplomatic, economic, and political means necessary to prevent genocide in Gaza. (March 18, 2024). For further information, click [here](#)
- Five human rights organizations in Israel filed a petition, calling on Israel's High Court to order the Israeli government to enable access of all humanitarian aid, equipment and staff to Gaza, especially to the north of the Strip; to significantly increase the volume of aid to Gaza, including by opening land crossings between Gaza and Israel, and to provide for all the needs of the civilian population in keeping with Israel's obligations as the occupying power. (March 18, 2024). For further information, click [here](#)

- The Communications and Advocacy Coordinator at ActionAid Palestine, Riham Jafari, stressed that the announcement of the approaching famine in Gaza constitutes a “stain on humanity’s conscience.” She stressed the urgent need for urgent intervention from world leaders to confront this catastrophe and an immediate and permanent ceasefire to intensify aid and prevent further suffering. (March 18, 2024). For further information, click [here](#)
- Oxfam and Human Rights Watch submitted a memorandum in response to NSM-20, which requires countries receiving US military assistance to assure compliance with international law when using US-origin “defense articles.” The organizations highlighted the lack of credibility in any assurances from the Israeli government regarding the non-arbitrary use of humanitarian aid and compliance with international humanitarian law, especially given Israeli forces' conduct since October 2023. Both organizations documented indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks by Israeli authorities, breaching international humanitarian law and imposing collective punishments on civilians. The memorandum called for the suspension of arms transfers to Israel. (March 19, 2024). For further information, click [here](#)
- The Guardian published a report detailing how UN staff working with Palestinians in the occupied West Bank have faced a systematic campaign of obstruction and harassment by the Israeli military and authorities since the beginning of the war in Gaza five months ago. Internal UN documents obtained by The Guardian record hundreds of incidents, including the alleged blindfolding and beating of UN staff at checkpoints, as well as the use of UN facilities by Israeli troops as firing positions during raids on refugee camps in which Palestinians were killed. (March 19, 2024). For further information, click [here](#)
- Law for Palestine, supported by the Independent Commission for Human Rights – Palestine and endorsed by a broader international coalition, submitted a Communication to the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court establishing the perpetration of the Crime of Genocide by members of the Israeli War Cabinet. (March 19, 2024). For further information, click [here](#)

- **BADIL Resource Center, in an oral statement during the UN Human Rights Council 55th Session, emphasized the ever-expanding protection gap facing all Palestinian refugees but especially those in the Gaza Strip who account for over 81 percent of the population there. Not only are Palestinians in the Gaza Strip being forcibly displaced multiple times but they are also being denied the most minimum form of international protection: humanitarian aid. (March 19, 2024). For further information, click [here](#)**
- **The Saint Eve Association has issued a firm condemnation of the unjust security bans and travel restrictions that unjustly limit the exercise of human rights, particularly the right to freedom of movement, for Palestinians. It calls upon Israel to cease all measures and policies that contribute to the fragmentation of the occupied population and land, including in East Jerusalem. It also calls on Israel to refrain from any other form of collective punishment and coercive environment against the protected Palestinian population. (March 20, 2024). For further information, click [here](#)**
- **Addamer organization has released a press statement on the occasion of Mother's Day, denouncing the occupation authorities for continuing to deprive 28 Palestinian mothers from being with their children. The statement highlights that the occupation has arrested 67 female prisoners, who continue to endure extremely challenging conditions in its prisons. This year has witnessed an alarming rise in violence against mothers and women, as well as a comprehensive aggression and genocide against the Palestinian people in various locations. (March 21, 2024). For further information, click [here](#)**
- **Diakonia International Humanitarian Law Center provided a legal update on violations of the rules on the protection of healthcare applicable in Gaza. The organization assesses violations of the rules of international humanitarian law for health care in the context of hostilities. (March 21, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)**
- **Physicians for Human Rights in Israel (PHRI) issued an urgent appeal to diplomats calling them to pressure Israel to halt the attack on Al Shifa Hospital". (March 22, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)**

### **Opinion Pieces and features**

- Declassified UK published an article by journalist Jonathan Cook entitled: “How the Western media helped build the case for genocide in Gaza.” (March 20, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)
- The Just Security blog published an article by researcher Victor Kattan entitled: “The Implications of An ICJ Finding that Israel is Committing the Crime Against Humanity of Apartheid.” (March 20, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)
- The Guardian published an opinion article by Alex de Waal entitled: “We are about to witness in Gaza the most intense famine since the second world war.” (March 21, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)
- The Guardian published an opinion article by the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, Mary Lawlor, entitled: “There is no moral argument that justifies the sale of weapons to Israel: Israel has shown it will use these arms indiscriminately against Palestinians. Why does the west continue to supply them?” (March 21, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)
- CounterPunch published an article by Jamal Kanj entitled: “Gaza’s Floating Pier and Biden’s Fake Empathy.” (March 21, 2024). For further details, click [here](#)

### **Human rights conferences and events**

- The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People intends to hold a conference in Geneva entitled, “Civil Society Organisations working on the Question of Palestine.” The conference will focus, among others, on the role of civil society worldwide in advocating for a durable and sustainable ceasefire and in achieving accountability for Israel’s war crimes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. For further information, click [here](#)

### **Upcoming human rights opportunities and events**

- The Human Rights and Democracy Media Center (SHAMS), in partnership with the Law for Palestine Organization, Addameer, the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, Adalah - the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, and the Palestinian Prisoner's Club, intend to hold a panel discussion in Geneva entitled, "Shadows of Oppression: Israel's Detention and Torture of Palestinians in OPT and Israel." The panel will be held on Monday, March 25, 2024 - from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm (CET) and will be broadcast on YouTube. For further details, click [here](#)