

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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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 Preparatory Committee of the Commission of Detainees and Ex-detainees Affairs for the International Day in Support of Gaza and Prisoners [announced](#) that August 3, 2024, will be a national and international day of support for Gaza and prisoners. The committee called for a comprehensive military embargo and legal sanctions on Israel, suspension of its membership in international organizations, and an end to all forms of cooperation with it. (July 21, 2024)**
- **The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates [condemned](#) the Israeli Knesset's decision to classify the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) as a 'terrorist' organization, viewing it as a premeditated act of hostility aimed at undermining the Palestinian refugee issue and a violation of Security Council Resolution 2730 (2024), which obliges states to protect United Nations institutions. The Ministry called on the**

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international community to intensify efforts to preserve UNRWA's mandate and ensure its continuity until the rights of Palestinian refugees are realized. (July 22, 2024)

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

- The Knesset General Assembly **approved** three bills in its **first reading** targeting the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). The bills include prohibiting UNRWA operations on Israel, withdrawing legal privileges and immunities from UNRWA employees, and classifying the UNRWA as a terrorist organisation while enforcing the severing of relations with it. (July 22, 2024)
- The “Knesset” General Assembly **approved** the Israeli government’s decision to transfer responsibility from the Israel Land Authority to the extremist Israeli Minister of National Security, **Itamar Ben-Gvir**, with the support of 55 Knesset members and the opposition of 51. The Israel Land Authority grants permission to Ben-Gvir to demolish homes in the Arab communities within the Green Line territories using the claim of alleged unauthorised construction, noting that such operations have not been executed within the Jewish community. (July 25, 2024)

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

- Francesca Albanese, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories, **stated** that a single state in Palestine already exists, that is the opposite of democracy, that becomes more brutal and sadistic towards its victims every day, which is the Israeli Apartheid. She **emphasized** the need to hold violent settlers accountable, adding that "As Israel has proven unwilling or unable to bring them to justice, other countries must do so." Albanese also noted that a decision by the International Court of Justice obliges UN member states to disclose a list of their citizens residing in the occupied Palestinian territories, particularly those committing crimes against the illegally occupied population. (July 21, 2024)
- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) **issued** a strong warning in regards to the effects of hunger on Palestinian mothers and children in Gaza as a result of Israel’s actions, leading to premature and low-birth-weight babies, as well as an increase in stillbirths and children suffering

from emaciation and delayed growth. The Fund stressed that a ceasefire is the solution to save their lives. (July 21, 2024)

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- **UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini [reported](#) that heavy gunfire from Israeli forces targeted a UN convoy heading to Gaza City. One vehicle was hit by at least five bullets while waiting near an Israeli checkpoint south of Wadi Gaza. "This took place yesterday. The teams were traveling in clearly marked UN armored cars and wearing UN vests." Like all other similar UN movements, this movement was coordinated and approved by the Israeli Authorities. Lazzarini added: "Humanitarian aid workers are NOT a target," and called for accountability for those responsible. Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi also [stressed](#) the need to protect UNRWA and all other humanitarian agencies and their workers, adding that this is a war crime. Safadi said: "Gaza has not only become a graveyard for children. It has become a graveyard for International law, a shameful stain on the whole International order." (July 22, 2024)**
- **Both [the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel](#), along with [the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People](#), welcomed the historic advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice. The opinion declared that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories is illegal under international law. Both bodies emphasized the importance of adhering to the obligations set out by the advisory opinion. Navi Pillay, the International Commission of Inquiry Chair, stated, "the Court was clear and unambiguous, and the advisory opinion entails international legal obligations not only for Israel but for the UN and all States." She added that the maintenance and promotion of the international rules-based order will depend on compliance with this advisory opinion.**
- **EU High Representative Josep Borrell [emphasized](#) the severe humanitarian crisis in Gaza, describing the ongoing conflict as a serious humanitarian emergency with over 17,000 orphans and a significant shortage of humanitarian aid. He criticized the decrease in daily aid truck deliveries to Gaza and highlighted the food insecurity affecting 96% of the population. Borrell called for urgent action to support a ceasefire, provide humanitarian assistance, and find a political solution, including a two-state solution. He also expressed regret over the gap between international law and the reality on the ground. (July 22, 2024)**

- **The Organization of Islamic Cooperation strongly [condemned](#) the continued war crimes, genocide and destruction committed by the Israeli occupation against the Palestinian people, including the targeting of health facilities, health workers, media personnel and the United Nations, such as UNRWA, and the heavy fire on one of its humanitarian convoys heading to Gaza, which is a flagrant violation of international law. The OIC also denounced the deprivation of Palestinian civilians from food, water, medical care and basic services, calling on the international community to stop the Israeli aggression. (July 22, 2024)**
- **UNICEF [reported](#) a sharp escalation in the loss of life among children in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with a total of 143 Palestinian children killed since October 2023, a spike of nearly 250 percent compared to the preceding nine months, during which 41 Palestinian children were killed. UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell stressed, 'What the children desperately need is an end to violence and a lasting political solution to the crisis, so that they can reach their fullest potential in peace and safety.' (July 22, 2024)**
- **UNRWA Director of Communications, Juliette Touma, [expressed](#) regret over the repeated incidents of attacks on humanitarian workers in the occupied Palestinian territory, stressing that humanitarian workers are not a target and must be protected at all times. (July 22, 2024)**
- **[The Arab League](#) condemned the Israeli Knesset's decision to label UNRWA as a terrorist organization. The Secretary-General of the Arab League described the decision as pointless, politically bankrupt, and an insult to international humanitarian and human rights work. [The Russian State Duma](#) also condemned the decision, viewing it as violating international law principles and norms, and called on global parliaments to denounce it. [The Jordanian Foreign Ministry](#) condemned the decision as an attempt to politically eliminate UNRWA and undermine its role in upholding the right of Palestinian refugees to return and receive compensation according to international law. Jordan urged the international community to support UNRWA politically and financially until the Palestinian issue is resolved based on a two-state solution. [Qatar](#), [Indonesia](#), and [Kuwait](#) strongly condemned the decision, calling on the international community to support UNRWA's mission. [The Turkish Foreign Ministry](#) described the decision as a new phase in Israel's attacks to destroy the Palestinian people and the Palestinian identity, reaffirming its strong support for UNRWA and urging the international community to raise its voice against attacks on the agency and support its mission. (July 22-23, 2024)**

- **Belgian Foreign Minister Hadja Lahbib [stated](#) that the European Union must speak with "one voice" regarding the situation in Gaza. She criticized the Israeli Knesset's decision to reject the establishment of a Palestinian state and emphasized the need to comply with the International Court of Justice's opinion on the settlements in the West Bank. Meanwhile, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell criticized Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for bending history and court opinions in his country's favor. Borrell stressed that the occupation is illegal and it has to come to an end. (July 23, 2024)**
- **In response to the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on the illegality of the Israeli occupation, Germany [said](#) it does 'not support Israeli occupation policy.' Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock [said](#), "Even if this report is not binding, the Israeli government would be well advised to take this report seriously." Baerbock described the text of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague as "game-changing." The report also indicated that the international community was responsible for a two-state solution, said Baerbock, adding that this is the only way to guarantee that Palestinians and Israelis would be able to live together in peace in the future. (July 23, 2024)**
- **The Japanese government [decided](#) to freeze the assets of four Israeli settlers in the West Bank due to their involvement in violence against Palestinians. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi emphasized that these extremist settlers had committed violent acts and forced Palestinians to leave their homes. Japan reiterated that Israeli settlement activities violate international law and undermine the viability of a two-state solution. The government stressed its commitment to work with the international community to fully freeze settlement activities. (July 23, 2024)**
- **The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) [reported](#) that approximately 150,000 civilians fled parts of Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip following an evacuation order issued by Israeli authorities and a subsequent intensification of hostilities in the area. OCHA expressed concern over the short interval between the dropping of leaflets announcing the evacuation order and the escalation of military operations, which posed significant risks to those fleeing. (July 23, 2024)**
- **UNICEF [reiterated](#) that humanitarian workers are protected under international humanitarian law and must not be targeted. It called for the facilitation and protection of its operations to**

ensure the delivery of lifesaving aid in Gaza. This statement came following an incident where two vehicles clearly marked with UNICEF were hit by live ammunition while waiting at a checkpoint near Wadi Gaza, as they were on their way to reunite five children, including an infant, with their father. (July 23, 2024)

- At a press conference, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning [emphasized](#) the initiative proposed by Foreign Minister Wang Yi regarding the conflict in Gaza. The initiative includes three main steps: first, achieving a comprehensive, lasting, and sustainable ceasefire in Gaza as soon as possible and ensuring unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid. Second, making joint efforts toward post-conflict governance of Gaza under the principle of “the Palestinians governing Palestine.” Finally, the third step is making Palestine a full UN member state and beginning to implement the two-state solution. (July 23, 2024)
- The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Mary Lawlor, [stated](#) that the Israeli authorities continue to target human rights defenders in the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. She highlighted that these defenders are targeted through prolonged administrative detention without charge, as well as through humiliation and ill-treatment. Lawlor urged the Israeli authorities to respect fair trial conditions or to immediately release the remaining human rights defenders immediately. (July 24, 2024)
- Tunisia [welcomed](#) the historic opinion of the International Court of Justice issued on July 19, 2024, highlighting the violations of international law by the Zionist entity and the Palestinian right to self-determination. Tunisia urged the international community to uphold international law without double standards and called on UN member states to implement the court's decision by not recognizing the occupation's legitimacy. (July 24, 2024)
- UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell [noted](#) the worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where ongoing attacks have destroyed schools and shelters, killing many Palestinians, including women and children, and overwhelming hospitals. She called for improved environmental security, protection of aid trucks, and emphasized the urgent need for an immediate and sustainable ceasefire. (July 24, 2024)
- US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller [stated](#) that “UNRWA is not a terrorist organization. We urge the Israeli Government and the Knesset to halt the movement of this legislation.” Miller stressed UNRWA’s vital role in delivering humanitarian assistance and other

critical assistance to Palestinians in Gaza and the region. Miller criticized Israeli attacks on UNRWA as "incredibly unhelpful," and affirmed US support for the agency's work while recognizing the need for reform. (July 24, 2024)

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- **The Australian Government [has imposed](#) Magnitsky-style targeted financial sanctions and travel bans on seven Israeli individuals and financial sanctions on one entity for their involvement in settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank. This violence includes beatings, sexual assault, and torture, resulting in serious injury and, in some cases, death. The sanctioned entity is a youth group responsible for inciting and perpetrating violence against Palestinian communities. Australia called on Israel to hold the perpetrators of settler violence accountable and to cease ongoing settlement activity, which inflames tensions and further undermines stability and prospects for a two-state solution. (July 25, 2024)**
 - **High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell [stated](#), "Outlawing UNRWA and labeling it as a terrorist organization, which it is not, amounts to targeting regional stability and the human dignity of all those benefiting from the UN agency's work." Borrell added, "We join many partners in urging the Israeli Government to halt this nonsense."**
 - **The Prime Ministers of Australia, Canada and New Zealand [issued](#) a joint statement stressing the need for an urgent ceasefire in Gaza and the risk of expanded conflict between Hezbollah and Israel. The statement condemned Hamas for "the atrocities of October 7" and ongoing "acts of terror" and called on Hamas to lay down its arms and release all hostages. It stressed the importance of protecting civilians and a sustained increase in the flow of assistance throughout Gaza is needed to address the humanitarian situation. The statement also supported the comprehensive ceasefire deal, outlined by President Biden and endorsed by the UN Security Council, called for a two-state solution, and called on Israel to respond substantively to the ICJ's advisory opinion. (July 26, 2024)**
 - **The UNESCO World Heritage Committee [has decided](#) to inscribe the site 'The Monastery of Saint Hilarion/Tell Umm Amer' in Palestine simultaneously on the World Heritage List and on the List of World Heritage in Danger. This decision recognizes both the site's value and the need to protect it from danger. (26 July 2024)**

- **“The campaign against UNRWA, attacks against its premises and legislative efforts to declare UNRWA a terrorist organization to end its operations are utterly unacceptable and endanger our operations,” [said](#) Muhannad Hadi, Deputy Special Coordinator, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. Hadi emphasized “The commitment or willingness of the aid workers is not the issue – it’s the inability to achieve our mandate, and that is beyond our control.” (July 25, 2024)**
- **The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) [has warned](#) that too little relief is reaching those most in need in Gaza. (July 26, 2024)**

Publications of human rights NGOs:

- **The World Peace Organisation [published](#) a report entitled “While We Were at War: The Annexation Revolution led by the Israeli Government in the West Bank since October 7”. The organization demonstrated how Israel had significantly invested in resources, amid the war in Gaza, to expand settlements in the West Bank and accelerate annexation processes. (July 22, 2024)**
- **Amnesty International has [expressed](#) concern about U.S. involvement in Gaza war crimes due to its provision of U.S.-origin weapons to Israel. Executive Director Paul O’Brien emphasized that evidence shows these arms have been used in war crimes by the Israeli government. Amnesty called for a comprehensive arms embargo on Israel, Hamas, and other Palestinian groups until there’s no risk of arms being used for serious violations of international law. They urged President Biden to halt weapon transfers to Israel to avoid complicity and warned weapons manufacturers of potential legal liability for war crimes. (July 23, 2024)**
- **The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect [issued](#) Atrocity Alert No. 404: Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, El Salvador, and North Korea. (July 24, 2024)**
- **The Physicians for Human Rights Organisation in Israel [published](#) a report with the collaboration of 21 Israeli human rights organizations, entitled: “State of the Occupation—Year 57: Joint Report on the Situation”. The report showcases the development of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories over the past year and focuses on the war in the Gaza Strip, with apprehension regarding possible war crimes committed by the Israeli authorities and the**

humanitarian crisis there. The report also tackles annexation efforts in the West Bank and displacement in East Jerusalem. (July 25, 2024)

- The International Committee of the Red Cross [published](#) an explanatory article entitled: “What does the law say about the responsibilities of the Occupying Power in the occupied Palestinian territory?”. (July 26, 2024)

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Opinion Pieces and features:

- Jewish Currents has [published](#) an article by Nicola Perugini and Neve Gordon titled "A Legal Justification for Genocide." The authors argue that Israel is using a familiar strategy on an unprecedented scale by extending the human shielding charge to cover every inch of Gaza.
- The Lawfare Institute [published](#) an article by Yuval Shany and Amichai Cohen, entitled: “Another Brick in the Wall? The ICJ Advisory Opinion on Israeli Policies and Practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”. (July 24, 2024)
- Institute for Security Studies [published](#) an opinion article by [Ottilia Anna Maunganidze](#), entitled : “ICJ rules that ending Palestine’s occupation is a global undertaking”. (July 25, 2024)