

## 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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**By Law for Palestine**

Prepared by: Nour Kharouf, Arwa Abdel Moniam, and Ahmad Al Rjoub

Translation: Asma Louzon and Aseel Ghabayen

Editing: Widad Hussein

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 head of the Palestinian National Council, Rawhi Fattouh, condemned the Israeli media's broadcast of documented footage showing the abuse, torture and humiliation of Palestinian prisoners. He said that the public airing of these crimes reflects a mentality of arrogance and contempt for international law. (January 19, 2026)
- The Palestinian National Council, the Jerusalem Affairs Department, the Refugee Affairs Department, the Human Rights and Civil Society Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates (MFA), and the Palestinian NGO Network strongly condemned the crime committed by the Israeli occupation authorities in demolishing UNRWA's headquarters in occupied Jerusalem. (January 20, 2026)
- The Jerusalem Governorate condemned the approval by the so-called Knesset General Assembly of a law prohibiting the employment of holders of academic degrees issued by Palestinian educational institutions within the occupation's education system, describing it as an exclusionary and blatantly racist piece of legislation. It warned of the dangers posed by the law,

noting that its impact could extend to vital sectors such as medicine, engineering, and law, and stressed the need for broad legal and judicial action to confront this encroachment. (January 22, 2026)

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

- Peace Now [reported](#) that the Israeli Civil Administration [announced](#) the conversion of 694 dunams of land belonging to the villages of Deir Istiya, Biddya, and Kafr Thulth - adjacent to the Wadi Qana nature area- into “state land.” The government may use the land to establish a new settlement in an area that constitutes the only remaining contiguous Palestinian expanse east of Qalqilya. (January 19, 2026)
- The Israeli Knesset General Assembly [approved](#) a bill to prevent the employment of teachers with academic degrees from the Palestinian Authority in the Israeli education system. This will include Palestinian academics within the Green Line who received their university education in the West Bank. (January 21, 2026)

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

- France [decided](#) to ship nearly 400 tons of food aid to the Gaza Strip in response to the enormous humanitarian needs in the territory, particularly for 42,000 Gazan children between the ages of six months and two years suffering from malnutrition. (January 18, 2026)
- The Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Philippe Lazzarini, [stated](#) that children in the Gaza Strip have been repeatedly deprived of essential vaccines during more than two years of war, exposing them to the risk of preventable diseases. He explained that harsh winter conditions are exacerbating health risks amid poor water and sanitation conditions in overcrowded shelters and the collapse of the healthcare system. (January 19, 2026)
- The United Nations Secretary-General [condemned](#) the actions taken by the Israeli authorities to demolish the Sheikh Jarrah compound belonging to UNRWA, affirming that the compound is a United Nations facility that is inviolable and must not be tampered with or interfered with. [The United Nations team in the occupied Palestinian territory](#) also condemned the demolition. Meanwhile, [the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk](#), expressed his deep dismay at what he described as a blatant violation, stressing the need to enable UNRWA to carry out its vital work. (January 20, 2026)

- UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini [stated](#) that the demolition of the Agency's headquarters in East Jerusalem constitutes an unprecedented escalation and a blatant violation of international law, including the privileges and immunities of the United Nations. He affirmed that these actions aim to erase the identity of Palestinian refugees and undermine the Agency's work. Lazzarini [warned](#) that the loss of moral compass signals a new era of brutality, noting that Israeli officials competed to claim credit for storming and destroying a United Nations building in occupied East Jerusalem, while others called for the extermination of an entire community of UNRWA staff. He called for these acts to be referred to the highest international levels. (January 20, 2026)
- The Vice-President of the French National Assembly, Clémence Guetté, [stated](#) that Israel continues its acts of violence against the United Nations, considering this a serious violation of international law and UN immunity. She emphasized that as the genocide persists, so does impunity, calling on France to take action. (January 20, 2026)
- [Qatar](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), and [Jordan](#) condemned the demolition of UNRWA buildings in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem, considering it a flagrant violation of international law and the UN Convention on the Privileges and Immunities. They called on the international community to uphold its responsibilities and protect the agency's work. The [League of Arab States](#), the [Organization of Islamic Cooperation](#), and [the Arab Parliament](#) also condemned the attack. (January 20-21, 2026)
- [EU Commissioner Hadja Lahbib](#) condemned the Israeli decision to storm and demolish the UNRWA compound in East Jerusalem, calling on the Israeli authorities to halt this action. [U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen](#) also condemned the demolition, while [the Swedish](#) and [Finnish](#) foreign ministers described the move as unacceptable. [The Belgian Foreign Ministry](#) called on Israel to stop the ongoing escalation that is affecting UNRWA's operations. [The United Kingdom](#) expressed its dismay over the attack on UNRWA's work, and an [EU spokesperson](#) stressed that the decision constitutes a violation of Israel's obligations, affirming that the European Union will continue to provide political and financial support to UNRWA. (January 20 - 21, 2026)
- The UN Human Rights Office [stressed](#) the need for Israel to immediately halt measures that are fragmenting the Palestinian social fabric, noting that around 700 Palestinians in Silwan in East Jerusalem are facing the risk of eviction as part of a gradual emptying of historic neighborhoods of their Palestinian residents. It also referred to steps aimed at expanding settlements in the E1

area, which threatens to isolate East Jerusalem and sever territorial continuity between the northern and southern West Bank. The Office affirmed that statements by senior Israeli officials reflect a policy aimed at entrenching annexation and preventing the establishment of a Palestinian state. (January 20, 2026)

- The United Nations stated that a three-month-old baby girl died from hypothermia in Gaza City, bringing this season's cold-related death toll to nine. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) renewed its urgent call to allow the entry of necessary energy sources to establish collective heating spaces. (January 21, 2026)
- The Palestine Committee of the Arab Parliament held its second meeting to follow up on the latest developments in the occupied Palestinian territory, emphasizing that Palestine remains at the forefront of the Parliament's priorities. (January 21, 2026)
- The Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Philippe Lazzarini, emphasized that the Israeli government's claims regarding its ownership or rights to the UNRWA headquarters property in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem are "false and illegal". He explained that UNRWA has been leasing the land from the Jordanian government since 1952, and that its seizure constitutes a blatant breach of international law. (January 21, 2026)
- The Director of UNRWA Affairs in the West Bank stated that the Israeli operation known as "Iron Wall," launched in Jenin Refugee Camp on 21 January 2025, has become the longest and largest military operation in the West Bank in decades, leading to the forced displacement of approximately 33,000 Palestinian refugees. He explained that the Jenin, Tulkarm, and Nur Shams camps were completely emptied of their residents after months of military activity and widespread demolitions aimed at ending their presence. (January 22, 2026)
- The White House announced that U.S. President Donald Trump has ratified the Charter of the Peace Council, making the Council an official international organization under his chairmanship. Trump described the Council as a step toward ending the decades-long conflict and creating opportunities for development and dignity for the people of Gaza. (January 22, 2026)
- The UN Human Rights Office in the Occupied Palestinian Territory expressed deep shock over the continued killing of civilians in Gaza following the ceasefire, documenting the deaths of at least 216 Palestinians, including 46 children and 28 women, since its implementation. The Office also highlighted ongoing fatalities caused by dire humanitarian conditions, including the deaths of

- nine children due to extreme cold, and called for respect for international law obligations and the lifting of restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip. (January 23, 2026)
- UN aid agencies [said](#) that Gaza reconstruction talks must not distract from immense and urgent humanitarian needs, stressing that the Strip's residents cannot wait for long-term plans while the killing and humanitarian collapse continue despite the ceasefire. They emphasized the necessity of opening the crossings and restoring vital lifelines, including the Jordan corridor, to ensure the unimpeded flow of aid. (January 23, 2026)
  - The [Guardian](#) [reported](#) that the United Arab Emirates plans to fund "Gaza's first planned community" on the ruined outskirts of Rafah, Gaza's southernmost city, in an area currently held by Israel. Palestinian residents would have access to basic services such as education, healthcare and running water, provided they submit to biometric data collection and security vetting, according to planning documents and people familiar with the latest round of talks at the US-led Civil Military Coordination Center in Israel. (January 23, 2026)
  - Newly unsealed documents from litigation brought by The Intercept and other news outlets [reveal](#) a critical discrepancy in Secretary of State Marco Rubio's rationale for attempting to deport five international students and academics last year, including Mahmoud Khalil and Yunseo Chung, for supporting terrorism. The Internal Department of Homeland Security and State Department memo shows the government found no evidence that Chung or Khalil provided "material support"—defined as cash payment, property, or services—to any terror group; instead, the document cites their advocacy for Palestinian rights through protests and writings, activities protected by the First Amendment. (January 23, 2026)

**Publications of human rights NGOs:**

- B'Tselem [published](#) a new report titled "Living Hell", documenting the testimonies of 21 Palestinians recently released from Israeli prisons. The report asserts that Israeli prisons operate as a network of torture camps for Palestinians, resulting in numerous deaths. It also notes that this policy reflects a coordinated assault by the Israeli system on Palestinian society, aimed at dismantling its social and political fabric. (January 20, 2026)
- The Palestinian Center for Human Rights [condemned](#) the Israeli occupation forces' storming of the UNRWA headquarters in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of occupied Jerusalem, the demolition of offices within the compound, and the lowering of the Agency's flag while raising the Israeli flag. The Center considered these actions a violation of the international legal immunity

of UN premises and personnel. It called on the international community to take immediate measures to ensure the continued operation of the Agency, protect its premises and staff, and hold Israel accountable for serious violations of the rights of Palestinian refugees. (January 20, 2026)

- **Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel**, submitted two urgent petitions to the Israeli Supreme Court. [The first](#) demanded a halt to the December 2025 law, Israel's anti-UNRWA law, which mandates the disconnection of water and electricity services from the agency's facilities in East Jerusalem and allows Israeli authorities to confiscate its property. [The second](#) was filed on behalf of the family of Mu'min Abu Riyash, a young man from Ramla who was killed by Israeli army fire in Qalqilya, and demands an immediate autopsy in the presence of a family-appointed doctor, as well as the prompt release of his body for burial in accordance with their religious beliefs. (January 20, 2026)
- **The Hind Rajab Foundation** [filed](#) an urgent complaint in U.S. courts against Israeli propagandist and suspected war criminal Guy Hochman. This follows his lengthy detention at Toronto Airport in Canada, which was triggered by the [filing of the complaint](#) and supported by an extensive evidentiary dossier documenting war crimes and direct incitement to genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. (January 20, 2026)
- **The Palestinian National Committee of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement** [condemned](#) the Trump administration's announcement of the so-called "Board of Peace" in Gaza. The committee described the move as an attempt to normalize the ongoing genocide of Palestinians and provide international cover for the Israeli occupation, stressing that the Palestinian people's inalienable rights to self-determination and the return of refugees cannot be bypassed. (January 20, 2026)
- **The Hind Rajab Foundation**, in collaboration with Greek lawyers, [submitted](#) an urgent report to the Supreme Prosecutor's Office of Greece against Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz during his official visit to the country. The report cites his involvement in the Israeli occupation's policies in Gaza since October 2023. (January 21, 2026)
- **The Palestinian Journalists Syndicate** [condemned](#) the deliberate assassination committed by the Israeli occupation army, which resulted in the martyrdom of 3 journalists following a direct strike on a civilian vehicle in Al-Zahraa City, central Gaza Strip. The journalists were carrying out a humanitarian journalistic mission to document the suffering of civilians in displacement camps.

Agence France Presse (AFP), for its part, [called](#) for a thorough and transparent investigation into the killing of its freelance photojournalist in the Gaza Strip during the same Israeli attack. (January 21-22, 2026)

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- Al-Haq [announced](#) that it had filed a criminal complaint against Nir Barkat, the Israeli Economy Minister and former Jerusalem mayor, for international crimes. Barkat was in Davos at the time, and Swiss law obliges the public prosecutor to examine the complaint while he is present in the country. The organization explained that Barkat, in his capacity as Economy Minister, bears responsibility for illegal settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel's actions in Gaza. (January 22, 2026)
  - Investigations by Forensic Architecture and Drop Site News have [revealed](#) that, in recent weeks, the Israeli military has begun transforming the yellow line—demarcating more than half of the Gaza Strip under its occupation and control—into a de facto physical border. This has been carried out through the construction of earth berms, or large raised mounds of soil, along sections of the line, creating a physical separation between the Palestinian population forced to reside in the western half of the enclave and Israeli forces occupying the eastern half. The investigation further concluded that, following the ceasefire, the Israeli military engaged in extensive construction of military infrastructure and road networks across more than 53 percent of the territory under its control. (January 24, 2026)

#### **Opinion Pieces and features:**

- +972 Magazine [published](#) an opinion piece by Hanno Hauenstein titled: "*Germany Never Stopped Arming Israel's Genocide*".(January 20, 2026)
- Arab News [published](#) an op-ed by Hani Hazaimeh titled: "*Palestinians need their rights, not temporary arrangements*".(January 21, 2026)
- +972 Magazine [published](#) an opinion piece by Samah Salaime titled: "*'Impunity Won't Last Forever': What Gives Francesca Albanese Hope*".(January 21, 2026)
- CounterPunch [published](#) an op-ed by Ken Orphan titled: "*Trump's "Boards of Peace" is a Grift in a Global Scale*".(January 22, 2026)
- J Street [published](#) an article by William Hamama and Larry Garber titled: "*Israel's Deregistration of International NGOs and the Broader Humanitarian Situation in Gaza*".(January 22, 2026)

- Truthout [published](#) an opinion piece by Craig Mokhiber, titled: "*Trump's Goal With "Board of Peace" Is to Replace UN With an Unaccountable Entity*". (January 22, 2026)
- Mondoweiss [published](#) an op-ed by By Qassam Muaddi, titled: "*How Israel and the U.S. are using the 'shock doctrine' to impose a new administration in Gaza*". (January 22, 2026)
- Middle East Eye [published](#) an opinion piece by Jonathan Cook, titled: "*Trump's 'Board of Peace' is the nail in Gaza's coffin*". (January 23, 2026)
- Reuters [published](#) an article by Dawoud Abu Alkas and others, titled: "*How Israel moved its 'Yellow Line' deeper into a shattered Gaza City neighbourhood*". (January 23, 2026)