

*Permanent Observer Mission  
of the State of Palestine  
to the United Nations*



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة  
لدولة فلسطين  
لدى الأمم المتحدة

15 October 2023

**Statement by Loureen Sayej, Third Secretary, before the 78<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly Meeting of the Sixth Committee on Universal Jurisdiction (Agenda item: 84)**

Our faith in humanity, our faith in the law and international justice, have been shaken to their core.

Our people are starving to death, denied water, medicine, electricity, fuel, and food, all while being savagely bombed, besieged, displaced, and killed *en mass* and in full view of the world.

UNRWA-Commissioner said, "Gaza is being strangled and it seems the world right now has lost its humanity...Gaza is running out of water...Gaza is running out of life...Gaza right now is even running out of body bags...This is absolutely unprecedented."

UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs said in a statement, "The past week has been a test for humanity, and humanity is failing".

The killing has not stopped, not for a minute. Since last Saturday, Israel has killed over 2750 , including over 1030 children. Israel has killed one child every 15 minutes for the past 8 days. 50 families have been decimated and wiped out from family registry. Erasure of entire family trees and obliterating their future. Doctors, journalists, schools, hospitals, ambulances, rescue teams, mosques, churches, refugee camps...Israel has dropped over 6,000 bombs including on families fleeing to "safety". 22 hospitals are under imminent threat of bombing. WHO declared that "Forcing ... patients to relocate ... could be tantamount to a death sentence". Doctors and paramedics have declared they will not evacuate.

Israel turned Gaza, that it has besieged for 17 years, from an open-air prison into an open-air morgue.

As UN Special Rapporteur on Palestine warned, "There is a grave danger that what we are witnessing may be a repeat of the 1948 Nakba, and the 1967 Naksa.... Israel has already carried out mass ethnic cleansing of Palestinians under the fog of war".

Israel's War Minister stated "We will eliminate everything- they will regret it"; Israel's Prime Minister said, "We will cripple them mercilessly", an Israel's Minister for the Advancement of the Status of Women said, "All of Gaza's infrastructures must be destroyed to its foundation and their electricity cut off immediately", Israel's Minister of Energy and Infrastructure Tweeted, "We will win. They will not receive a drop of water or a single battery until they leave the world". Recognizing the Nakba, an Israeli Knesset member said, "Right now one goal: Nakba. A Nakba that overshadows the Nakba of 48". And if we think we have heard it all, Israel's President goes on TV to declare that, "It is an entire nation out there that is responsible [...] It is not true this rhetoric about civilians not being aware, not

involved. It is absolutely not true." One day after this statement, an Israeli soldier declared on CNN, "The war is with all the civilians" and Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement saying, "It is inconceivable that an announcement expressing concern especially for the residents of Gaza is issued."

How can such dehumanizing language and a publicly-stated policy of collective punishment and indiscriminate killing by an occupying Power and its officials can be justified? Rationalized with ease and calmness or applauded? How can the world sustain this injustice, brutality, and savagery in 2023?

What does the collective failure to hold Israel accountable for its crimes for over the past 75 years tell us about the dangers of impunity or the importance of accountability? What is the point of defending what they call a "rules-based order", if the rules change depending on the identity of the perpetrators and the identity of the victims? Only unhinged racism allows to consider us less human or consider that the life of a Palestinian child is less worthy than the life of another child.

Today, our children are writing their names on their palms in order to be recognized once the bombs hit their homes. Our men are digging mass graves to bury the identified and the unidentified. Our women are cleaning the burns on their bodies with regular soap because hospitals ran out of antiseptics. Our rescue teams are eating bread covered in blood to sustain themselves. Our paramedics are killed while saving lives. Our elders are thirsty looking for water to drink under the rubble. Our families are denied the right to mourn.

The worst is yet to come they say. We still await clear calls for a stop to the massacres, and as the humanitarian and health system crumble, as now families are living together in much more crowded homes, worst is a certainty if this madness is not stopped.

Tareq Hajjaj, a writer from Gaza wrote, "Remember that the world that pretended to be the savior of humanity participated in killing it. Do not believe them when they speak about human rights and humanity. They have no humanity."

May the next hours prove him wrong.

As we speak of accountability, international justice and jurisdiction, Israeli impunity continues to be an affront to our people and to the law, and it is what allowed the recurrence of crimes against our people. It is why they can bomb and besiege yet again confident they will not be held accountable. We call on all to live up to the rules humanity elaborated to prevent exactly what is happening today in Gaza, and what has been happening in Palestine for decades.