

State of Palestine

*Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations
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دولة فلسطين

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Briefing by the State of Palestine to Disarmament and Humanitarian Experts on the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA) in occupied Palestine

Thank you for attending our briefing for Signatories of the Political Declaration on EWIPA and other interested States and stakeholders. We have asked you to join us here today to brief you on the recent developments in occupied Palestine.

Let us first remind you of some of the facts coming out of occupied Palestine:

Gaza, a besieged occupied enclave of Palestinian land of 365 square kilometers, is one of the most densely populated places on Earth. 2.3 million people live there—nearly 50% of them children, 70% of them refugees. We have said this before and we will say it again: Bombing Gaza is tantamount to bombing mainly children and refugees who have nowhere to run.

Over the past month, after issuing genocidal calls publicly—with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowing to turn Gaza into a “deserted island” and Israeli Defence Minister calling Palestinians “human animals”—Israel, the occupying Power, proceeded to drop **over 25,000 tonnes of explosives on Gaza, equivalent to nearly two nuclear bombs**. To put this in perspective, it is estimated that the weight of the nuclear bomb dropped by the United States on Hiroshima in Japan at the end of the Second World War amounted to about 15,000 tonnes of explosives. Israel openly brags that it has so far dropped **more than 12,000 bombs on Gaza**, a territory that is 25 miles long and packed with around 1 million children. These bombs have huge destructive power, some of them ranging from 150 kg to 1000 kg. **Experts now consider this to be the most sustained and intense bombing campaign of a populated area in history.**

This has included the use of white phosphorous as confirmed by numerous human rights organisations including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. White phosphorous—in areas of high concentration of civilians, in one of the most densely populated areas on Earth. This is a war crime.

“Relentless bombardment,” as has been described by the UN Secretary-General, has been accompanied by Israel shutting down all exits from Gaza, cut off food, water, fuel, gas, electricity and, on several occasions, even telecommunications, from the civilian population. **A blatant act of collective punishment in which, inter alia, starvation is being used as a means of warfare.**

More than 10,000 Palestinians have been killed, nearly 50% of them are children, 73% of them are children, women and the elderly, 90% of them are civilians. Entire families have been wiped off the population registry in Gaza. The known child death toll now stands at 4,300 Palestinian children killed in Gaza. But it is impossible to keep track: one Palestinian child is killed every 10 minutes. According to Save the Children, **the number of Palestinian children reported killed in Gaza in just three weeks has surpassed the annual number of children killed across the world’s conflict zones since 2019.** As the UN Secretary-General put it, Gaza has become “a graveyard for children”.

And this number does not include more than 1,300 children who are still missing, buried under the rubble, dying painful and protracted deaths as they are suffocated by the remains of their homes. Nor does it reflect the number of children orphaned, children whose lives have been destroyed, children with not a single family member left—indeed a new acronym was invented by medical staff in Gaza over the past month, WCNSF (Wounded Child No Surviving Family) as Israel decimates one family after another; such an acronym should never have come into existence. This number does not account for the children slowly dying from hunger and thirst; the children getting sick from drinking sewage and sea water; the children who have survived and are enduring trauma that is beyond comprehension and will scar them for generations. UNICEF described the four-year-old daughter of one UN staffer in Gaza as pulling out her hair and scratching her legs until they bleed because of the “massive stress of living through this every day”.

99 United Nations Staff— **the highest number of UN fatalities recorded in a single conflict** --5 members of the IFRC, a member of Medecins Sans Frontières, more than 190 medical personnel and more than 40 journalists—**the highest number of journalists killed over a four-week period than in any conflict in at least three decades**—have been killed. Thousands of people are being buried in mass graves, denied dignity even in death.

Do you realise the gravity of what we are reporting to you? The most sustained and intense bombing campaign of a populated area in history; the highest number of UN fatalities recorded in a single conflict; the highest number of journalists killed over a four-week period than in any conflict in at least three decades. **Israel is setting new lows for humanity.**

How did we arrive at such a staggering death toll, one that has surpassed the genocide of Srebrenica?

Because *nothing, no one* has been spared from relentless and indiscriminate Israeli bombing. Everything and everyone is considered a legitimate target. An Israeli official told Israel’s Channel 13 that “Gaza will eventually turn into a city of tents... There will be no buildings.” And this is exactly what is being implemented. So far, in this frenzy of unhinged genocidal violence—throughout which Israel has not received a single word of condemnation from most Western governments—almost **50% of all civilian infrastructure** in Gaza has been destroyed, rendered uninhabitable or otherwise damaged. The UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing stated that Israel’s widespread and systematic bombardment of housing and civilian infrastructure in Gaza amounts to **a war crime and a crime against humanity.**

70% of Gaza’s population, more than 1.5 million people, has been forcibly displaced from their homes since the aggression began. Many are crammed in schools, hospitals, churches transformed into emergency shelters and struggling with inadequate food, water, blankets and hygiene kits and extremely unsanitary conditions. In one UNRWA-run centre, for example, 22,000 Internally Displaced Persons are currently being sheltered. The space per person is less than two square metres and at least **600 people are sharing a single toilet.** Several cases of acute respiratory infections, diarrhoea and chicken pox have already been reported among people taking refuge at UNRWA shelters. The average Palestinian in Gaza is living on **two pieces of bread per day**, according to the UN.

Residential areas including refugee camps, apartment buildings, hospitals and schools, as well as ambulances, bakeries, mosques and churches have been directly targeted and reduced to rubble. There are too many examples but let me give you a few.

This includes Israel’s repeated targeting on 31 October and 1 November of the Jabalia refugee camp—a camp of 1.4 square kilometers with a population of 116,000—with 6,000kg of explosives, killing more than 200 Palestinians and destroying entire residential blocks in the camp, leaving massive craters in the place of where hundreds of homes once stood. A collective of UN experts called this Israeli airstrike “a brazen violation of international law—and a war crime.” **None of the refugee camps in Gaza has been spared Israeli attack.** Whether Jabaliya, Nuseirat, Al Shati, Deir Al-Balah, Al

Maghazi, Al Bureij, Khan Younis or Rafah, all have been targeted, alongside other civilian areas across Gaza.

It includes Israel's targeting just a couple of days ago of an ICRC convoy of five trucks and two vehicles with lifesaving medical supplies; civilians sheltering at UN schools have been bombed—indeed, not even UN facilities flying the UN flag are immune from Israel's indiscriminate attacks; civilians shelter at the Greek Orthodox Saint Porphyrius Church in Gaza were bombed; al-Omari Mosque, an ancient mosque dating back from 7th century, is one among 55 mosques that have been destroyed; an ambulance convoy outside Al-Shifa hospital carrying injured patients were targeted; 220 school buildings have been attacked and **1/3 of all schools in Gaza are damaged**; the entrance of a children's hospital was bombed (al-Nasser Children's Hospital); the cancer ward at a children's hospital was bombed (al-Rantisi Children's Hospital). Refugees waiting in line for hours at a bakery for a loaf of bread have been bombed; Cemetery workers at gravesites have been bombed; Solar panels used to run bakeries and hospitals have been targeted; water tanks, water wells, water pipelines have been directly hit; a truck carrying water bottles was bombed; universities have been bombed; the targeting of the French cultural institute in Gaza was bombed; Al Azhar University was bombed. And we could go on, and on, and on.

After illegally ordering more than one million Palestinians to leave northern Gaza—an impossible ask and one aimed at de-populating the area and facilitating forcible transfer and mass ethnic cleansing—**Israel proceeded to bomb convoys of refugees fleeing to the south**, killing mainly women and children. **This amounts to the war crime of perfidy.** You can see video footage of roads, which were meant to be safe roads for evacuation, strewn with the dead bodies of fleeing refugees, a lot of people cut into pieces. And think for a moment of the numerous Palestinians in Gaza with disabilities who are not able to evacuate or escape when warplanes strike.

More than 28,000 Palestinians have been injured over the past month in Gaza. In the meantime, Israel continues to target hospitals, doctors, nurses, patients. In the past three days alone, Israel has bombed 8 hospitals in Gaza. On 17 October, it targeted the Baptist Al Ahli hospital in Gaza, killing at least 500 patients, health workers and families seeking refuge. **For those who have fallen prey to Israel's disinformation campaign and are still convinced that Israel was certainly not responsible for this strike, we urge you to read investigative reports by the New York Times, Channel 4, Forensic Architecture UK, the Earshot audio investigation group, and Al Jazeera among others.**

While Al Ahli hospital is still reeling from the carnage caused by the strike, no less than 20 other hospitals and 49 health clinics have been hit by Israeli fire. **Half of the hospitals in Gaza are now no longer functional**, including The Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital, Gaza' main hospital for cancer patients. The main generator at the Indonesian hospital has run out of fuel. Al-Quds and Al-Shifa hospitals continue to be threatened by Israel with demands for the evacuation of thousands of patients and civilians sheltering at the hospitals, even as they struggle to keep operational without fuel, electricity and medical supplies; **Newborn babies' lives are at risk as incubators shut down.** As warned by a surgeon at Al-Shifa: "Basically without electricity, this hospital becomes a mass grave". There is no more space left in hospital morgues, not enough body bags for the scale of the carnage in Gaza.

A pediatric intensive care doctor in Gaza put it this way: "we are on our way to collapsing from the horror of the scenes we see, despite our strength, but it is beginning to fade and the world is watching as if we were in a movie theatre shoring a horror movie and the viewers are silent"-

Every day, 180 pregnant women are giving birth in appalling conditions for both mother and baby. Caesarians are being performed without anaesthesia. WHO says doctors are performing surgeries and amputations without anaesthesia.

On average, every hour in Gaza: 15 people are killed, including 6 children; 35 people are injured; 42 bombs are dropped; and 12 buildings are destroyed. **The reverberating effects of the use of explosive**

weapons on hospitals, schools, food security, water, electricity and shelter, exacerbated by Israel's total siege of Gaza, are affecting millions. As Oxfam has stated, "The severity of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza that is unfolding as a result of Israel's siege of the area is worse than anything international disaster relief organization Oxfam has seen in its 80-year history....The humanitarian rulebook has been thrown out, and polite pleas from politicians to 'minimise civilian fatalities' are naive at best, and at worst seem blind to the unimaginable horrors already taking place in Gaza".

But this humanitarian catastrophe is not the result of a natural disaster. It is the result of a deliberate genocide, supported militarily, diplomatically, politically by some of the States represented in this room. **For anyone still in denial or deliberately trying to cover this fact, let us say it loud and clear: This is genocide.**

If you don't want to listen to us, listen instead to **Israeli historian Raz Segal** who directs the Master of Arts in Holocaust and Genocide Studies program at Stockton University, called what Israel is doing in Gaza "a textbook case of genocide".

Listen to a **collective of UN experts** who over the past few, issued press statements "sounding the alarm" about the "ongoing campaign by Israel resulting in crimes against humanity in Gaza" (19 October) and stating that they "remain convinced that the Palestinian people are at grave risk of genocide" (2 November).

Over **1,000 scholars and practitioners of international law, conflict studies and genocide studies** signed a public statement warning of the possibility of genocide being perpetrated by Israeli forces against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

Listen to what **Jews worldwide** including from organisations like Jewish Voice for Peace, IfNotNow and Naamod UK are rising up to say : "Not in our name!" "End the genocide in Gaza!" "Never again is now!"

But if this isn't convincing enough, listen directly to what Israeli politicians themselves have publicly declared:

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu gave a speech in which he called the Palestinians "Amalek". To those not familiar with the biblical term "Amalek", it is a quotation from first Samuel 15:3 "Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys."

Daniel Hagari, Israeli army spokesperson: "We are dropping hundreds of tons of bombs on Gaza. The focus is on destruction, not accuracy."

Ariel Kallner, Israeli politician of the Likud party: "Now there is only one goal: Nakba (expulsion of the Palestinians). A Nakba in Gaza that will dwarf the Nakba of 1948"

Ytzhak Herzog, President of Israel: "It is an entire nation who are responsible. This rhetoric about civilians supposedly not being involved is absolutely untrue...and we will fight until we break their backs"

Tally Gotliv, Israeli politician from the Likud Party: "Jericho Missile! Doomsday Weapon! That's my opinion. Powerful rockets to be fired without borders, Gaza to be smashed and razed to the ground. Without mercy."

Ezra Yachin, Israeli army veteran, in an address to Israeli reservists: "Wipe out their families, their mothers and their children. These animals must not be allowed to live any longer."

Maya Golan, Israel's Minister of Women's Affairs: "I want to tell the world what they have long known about me in Israel: I don't care about Gaza. I literally don't care about Gaza. They can go swimming in the sea."

Galit Distel Atbaryan, a Likud party Knesset member who was public diplomacy minister until mid-October, tweeted that Israel's politicians should unite and erase "all of Gaza from the face of the earth."

Merav Ben-Ari, Israeli Knesset member: "The children in Gaza brought it upon themselves."

Former military officer Eliyahu Yossian said the IDF must enter Gaza "with the aim of revenge, zero morality, maximum corpses," and told *Channel 14* in Israel that "there is no population in Gaza, there are 2.5 million terrorists... all of them are terrorists... We should have killed 50,000 Gazans."

Earlier this year, Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said at an event in Paris, "There's no such thing as Palestinians because there's no such thing as a Palestinian people."

Amihai Eliyahu, Israeli Minister of Heritage, suggested that a nuclear bomb be dropped on Gaza. (Why was he suspended? Not because of his genocidal call which multiple other Israeli officials have made. But because his statement entails an official recognition that Israel possesses nuclear weapons. Although everyone knows that Israel has nuclear weapons, Israel has had a policy of never officially admitting that as it would have international repercussions including at the IAEA.)

This is what is said in the open, so you can just imagine what it said behind closed doors by the extremists in the Israel's fascist government and military.

Usually, the most difficult part of proving genocide is intent. In this case, the intent by Israeli leaders has been so explicitly stated and publicly stated – by the prime minister, by the president, by senior cabinet ministers, by military leaders.

Why, then and here we are speaking to Israel's allies—do you still insist on denying it? Is it too embarrassing to admit that you are supporting a State that is committing genocide. There is no use putting your heads in the sand. Everyone can see that this is the reality and it is about time you recognise it and take responsibility for it.

You cannot hide behind the rhetoric that Israel's actions constitute "self-defence". Do your governments feel no shame, using language intended to justify the killing of thousands of children? When Israel is committing a host of international crimes including collective punishment- a war crime; forcible transfer- a war crime; the targeting of civilians, including humanitarian aid workers and journalists- a war crime; the targeting of civilian infrastructure- a war crime-; ethnic cleansing- a crime against humanity-; perfidy- a war crime; incitement to genocide- an international crime; using starvation as a means of warfare- a war crime-; and genocide. **Carpet-bombing an occupied, colonised, besieged population with the latest military technology is not self-defence. It is aggression.**

Besides, we encourage your governments to seek legal advice before making such statements. Under international law, an occupying Power is obliged to protect—*not attack*—protect, the population under its occupation. It cannot declare them the "enemy" or declare "war" on them.

Under international law, an occupying Power does not have the right to invoke "self-defence" against its occupied territory under Article 51 of the UN Charter. This was confirmed by the International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion on The Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in 2004. For further reading, we refer you to paragraph 139 of this Advisory Opinion and the law of belligerent occupation. Any defensive measures by an occupying Power can neither take the form of warfare nor be justified as self-defence under the law of

belligerent occupation. Do you realise the precedent you would be setting by saying that an occupying Power under international law has the right to self-defence against the territory it occupies?

Let us also remind you that this is the sixth military aggression by Israel against Gaza since 2008. This is in line with Israel’s policy of so-called “mowing the lawn” in Gaza. Such dehumanising rhetoric to refer to Palestinians—a population that needs to be periodically bombed to the ground, like one periodically mows the grass, is telling. What have all of these assaults achieved except to bring misery to a population that, already in 2020, was living in “unlivable” conditions, according to the UN? **What does Israel hope to achieve now by carrying out genocide? Bring peace, security and stability in the Middle East?**

And, still, the Israeli war machine is permitted – and enabled – to continue targeting civilians and civilian objects, openly defying the global calls for an immediate ceasefire and for the protection of the civilians under its occupation, including children.

Let us show you a glimpse of the effects that this has had: **Screening of video.**

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How is this relevant to the Political Declaration on EWIPA?

As a nation that has suffered severely from the repeated use of EWIPA particularly in Gaza, which is one of the most densely-populated areas in the world, we are acutely aware of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences engendered by the use of EWIPA.

Our participation in the political declaration process was driven by our firm conviction that urgent and concrete measures should be taken to put an end to this unacceptable pattern of harm.

For these reasons, we found it to be both a political and moral imperative to support the political declaration process and **we were proud to have been one of the first States to announce that it would endorse this declaration.**

We welcomed the fact that the declaration’s text clearly recognised the link between the use of EWIPA and grave humanitarian consequences, including both direct and reverberating effects. We welcomed also references to accountability, facilitating humanitarian access, victim assistance, and the role of data collection and analysis to better understand humanitarian impacts.

In short, we were hopeful. We thought that the political declaration adopted in Dublin one year ago would meaningfully strengthen then protection of civilians from the use of EWIPA. We were encouraged when we saw many States joining the declaration, committing to take action to address civilian harm from the use of EWIPA.

But we stand utterly, utterly disappointed as now the Palestinian population in Gaza faces the most sustained and intense bombing campaign of a populated area in world history. **Amid the bombs in Gaza the sound that rings the loudest is the silence and even encouragement of the use of EWIPA by Israel’s allies, many of whom were at the forefront of advocating for this declaration.**

At the First Committee in New York, which was taking place at the same time as Gaza was being pummeled with explosive weapons, **Australia (on behalf of a group of States), the Czech Republic, Norway, the UK and Ukraine** spoke about the humanitarian consequences of explosive weapons in another context, without mentioning Gaza. How they could so deliberately ignore the most illustrative case of the devastating humanitarian consequences from the use of EWIPA as they were speaking, is beyond us.

Among others, **the EU, Austria, France, Germany, Italy and the UK** all welcomed the political declaration and highlighted the importance of its adoption. How could they be highlighting the importance of the declaration, when they themselves are not implementing their commitments under the declaration in relation to Gaza?

The EU and those States have not uttered a single word of condemnation with regard to Israel even as it has killed more than 10,000 Palestinians in Gaza through the use of EWIPA. Instead, they continue to support Israel's actions, whether diplomatically, politically or militarily, enabling it to continue its use of EWIPA and egregious violations.

Ask your governments: do you condemn Israel's use of EWIPA leading to the killing of more than 4300 children in four weeks? And if not, why not?

We know, as you do, that had this been happening in a different part of the world, you would have been horrified. You would have jumped to impose sanctions. Imagine if a hospital in the United States had been hit with explosive weapons, killing patients, doctors and staff. Or if a church in Europe sheltering homeless refugees was bombed. Or if 1000 apartment buildings in any city got levelled, with children and women inside. **Any single one of those crimes would have caused your outrage, as they should. Yet all of them happen in Palestine in the span of a few weeks and you are unmoved.**

The Austrian government here deserves a special mention. For years, Austria has been at the forefront of initiatives and efforts on EWIPA. We believed, genuinely, that Austria had a progressive agenda on disarmament and that it was a champion of the Declaration. However, when push came to shove, and Gaza has been facing "the most sustained and intense bombing campaign of a populated area in history," the Austrian government was one of the very few States that decided to vote NO on a General Assembly resolution calling for a cessation of hostilities.

How will anyone believe Austria again when it speaks about the Political Declaration on EWIPA and its importance, when it is flouting its very own proclaimed values, and refusing to call for a cessation of hostilities even as Israel tramples on all of the disarmament norms and principles that Austria has advocated for, for so long?

Austria has invited military experts and international experts to discuss the "effective implementation of the Political Declaration" in Vienna from 24-25 January. We support this invitation. But before welcoming these States, Austria needs to take the lead in actually implementing its commitments under the declaration when it comes to Palestine. All eyes will be on Austria at the CCW next week and thereafter to see how it plans to make the declaration effective when it comes to the use of EWIPA against Gaza.

But not just Austria. All eyes will also be on all other EWIPA Political Declaration Signatories who have refused to call for a ceasefire, the US first and foremost, which has the power to impose a ceasefire. Had the US, Israel's main ally and supporter, ordered a ceasefire 7 days ago, 1500 more Palestinian children would still be alive. Had it US ordered a ceasefire 14 days ago, 3000 more Palestinian children would still be alive. This is a huge responsibility.

But even more horrifying than that, in the midst of Israel's use of EWIPA in Gaza, and despite well-documented crimes being committed against the Palestinian population through that use, **the US, the UK, Canada, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands, have continued their supply of arms and military support to Israel.** The UK and Germany, for example, have in recent days decided to supply additional military equipment or 'fast-track' the supply of military equipment to Israel. Deutsche Welle reported that as of 2 November, the German government has authorized arms exports to Israel worth approximately 303 million euros. Sending more explosive weapons to Israel as it pummels Gaza flies in the face of your commitment to the Political Declaration let alone your obligations under international law.

In the United States, which already funds about 16% of Israel's military budget, including more than \$3.8 billion in aid in 2023 alone, the US Congress has approved an additional 14,5-billion-dollar military aid package to Israel. The US is also planning to send 320 million dollars in precision bombs to Israel according to the Wall Street Journal. Can the US tell us how this is in line with its commitments under the Declaration on EWIPA, let alone its obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law?

It is unsurprising that the stock prices of weapon manufacturers have skyrocketed over the recent period and continue to rise as Israel bombards Gaza. For example, the market value of the biggest US weapons manufacturers increased by over 23 billion dollars after 7 October. And it is undeniable that the US profits from war: throughout its entire history there are only 15 years in which the US has not been at war with another country. **But no one—neither Israel, nor Israel's allies, nor arms manufacturers—should be allowed to profit from the killing or maiming of Palestinian civilians.**

As for Australia, human rights NGOs have launched legal action in the Federal Court of Australia seeking access to all permits allowing the export of arms and weapons to Israel that have been granted by the Minister for Defence since 7 October 2023. **If Australian-made weapons are being used against Palestinian civilians, the disarmament community deserves to know.**

Yesterday, 113 organisations endorsed a call for all States to end complicity in Israel's crimes by imposing a two-way arms embargo on Israel. We encourage you to read it.

Arms transfers to Israel as it pummels Gaza with explosive weapons are contrary to basic canons of morality, legality and humanity, and must be called out and denounced. They **could render government officials individually criminally liable for their role in aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity.** Indeed, a number of NGOs have formally notified politicians of relevant countries of their intention to prosecute them for their role in aiding and abetting Israel's perpetration of international crimes.

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It would be in the interest of no one, for double standards to lead to discrediting of the Political Declaration on EWIPA itself. The Palestine question remains a litmus test for the viability and efficacy of international law and the international system as a whole.

The credibility of this political declaration, and of international law and the multilateral system more broadly, is dependent upon it being implemented by endorser States in all circumstances and not just when convenient or politically expedient. It is, after all, the result of a multilateral effort, whose relevance should be global, universal and applicable irrespective of time, place or individual circumstances or narrow national interests.

These are serious times; they require serious and responsible leadership. International law is clear. The grave breaches that are being committed by Israel are clear. Millions of civilian lives are at stake. No one, no government official, should want to be seen as complicit in the mass killings of Palestinian civilians or their continuation.

We are thankful that the overwhelming majority of States in the international community have adopted a principled stance against the genocide in Gaza- loudly calling for a ceasefire now and an end to the occupation and to the oppression of the Palestinian people that has endured for more than 75 years. Some of them have recalled their Ambassadors from Israel, suspended bilateral relations, imposed sanctions, and we are grateful to them. We commend and applaud States who have refused to remain silent. Thank you for your moral clarity. Belgium's deputy prime minister called on the Belgian government yesterday to adopt sanctions against Israel and investigate the bombings of hospitals and refugee camps in Gaza. **This is what leadership looks like.**

To those other States we say: try to restore your credibility. It is not too late to change course and act responsibly.

We call upon all States to urgently, including during the CCW MSP next week, to take the following actions:

- **Condemn, in the strongest terms**, the use of explosive weapons by Israel in one of the most densely populated areas in the world, including the use of incendiary weapons, killing more than 10,000 Palestinians including more than 4,300 children
- **Call for an immediate ceasefire**
- **Condemn** the total siege of Gaza, which has cut off from the civilian population goods essential to their survival, including water, gas, fuel, electricity and medicine, and all other forms of collective punishment
- **Condemn** Israel's deliberate targeted attacks on Palestinian civilians and civilian infrastructure and all other war crimes and crimes against humanity that it has perpetrated over the past month
- **Call for** international protection for the Palestinian people, as demanded by international humanitarian law and United Nations resolutions
- **Call for an immediate cessation of all transfers of military equipment, assistance and munitions to Israel, including revoking all extant licences**
- **Call for urgent action to ensure** immediate emergency humanitarian access and assistance and restoration of basic human necessities – food, water, fuel and electricity to – to the Palestinian population in Gaza
- **Call for assistance to victims of EWIPA**, including people injured, survivors, families of people killed or injured as well as affected communities
- **Call for accountability and an end to impunity** for Israel's violations of international law, prioritizing atrocity crimes, including through universal jurisdiction efforts and by publicly and unconditionally supporting the current investigation carried out by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.
- **Acknowledge and call for an eradication of** the root causes of the current crisis and recurrent cycles of violence, namely, Israel's 75-year policy of dispossession of, and imposition of an apartheid system over, the Palestinian people as a whole, its 56-year illegal occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza, and its 16-year illegal blockade of Gaza

If, in the midst of the well-documented crimes by Israel over the past month, Israel's allies instead choose to continue remaining silent or to continue providing military, political or diplomatic support to Israel as it commits genocide, then they do not get to ever pretend again that they support international law, care about human life, or have moral convictions that apply universally.

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We would like to end by showing in the face of political inaction, the millions of people who are taking to the streets to call for a ceasefire, for peace, for humanity. Screening of video.

And so you need to ask yourselves. Why are millions of people around the world concerned about Palestine? Of all faiths, of all walks of life. Because this is not about your particular faith, ethnicity or national origin. This is about being human. This is about fighting for human dignity, for the application of the law, against oppression.

As Palestinian intellectual Edward Said said, "Remember the solidarity shown to Palestine here and everywhere... and remember also that there is a cause to which many people have committed themselves, difficulties and terrible obstacles notwithstanding. Why? Because it is a just cause, a noble ideal, a moral quest for equality and human rights."

As we said in another briefing, people will remember this time in history. If you sometimes wonder what you would have done if you had lived during apartheid in South Africa, slavery or the civil rights movement, we are here to say: you are doing it right now. This is that kind of time in history. **People will look back at this time when an occupied besieged population mainly consisting of refugees and children was cut off from food, water, electricity, fuel and telecommunications, and was being bombed to the ground, and they will remember where people, where your governments stood.**

Behind these placards we know that you are not just diplomats sitting in a room- you are humans. Perhaps you see things in human rights terms whereas the highest political echelons of your governments see them only in political or electoral terms. You have a responsibility as diplomats to guide and advise your governments. **We are not asking you, or them, to be pro-Palestinian. Simply to be pro-international law, the laws that they themselves have elaborated, embraced or committed to. To be pro-peace. Pro-humanity.** Your governments should uphold international law and restore their own credibility and standing. Demonstrations make it very clear; while some of your governments stand with Israel as it pummels Gaza, world public opinion stands firmly with Palestine, with the law, with peace.

We are talking to you because you are the international community. You are not mere passive spectators. You can make a difference. Indeed, you have a duty to make a difference. When there is genocide happening, no one can sit idly by. You have the power to change the course of history, and to save lives.

As the Chief of the WHO, Tedros, said: “History will judge us all by what we do to end this tragedy.” As the UN Secretary-General said, Guterres: “The nightmare in Gaza is more than a humanitarian crisis; it is a crisis of humanity”

For the sake of humanity, for the sake of peace, for the sake of the law and this multilateral system, call for a ceasefire now, make good on your commitments under the EWIPA declaration, make good on your obligations under international law. Be on the right side of history. It is not too late, and we hope that this time, finally, our calls will be urgently heeded.