

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



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة  
لدولة فلسطين  
لدى الأمم المتحدة

**Statement of H.E. Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, before the UN Security Council, 8 December 2023**

Mr President,

You are the third President of the Security Council to take office since Israel started its carpet bombing of the Gaza Strip. We hope that on this day, and under your Presidency, the Council will finally be able to call for an immediate ceasefire.

Allow me to thank the Secretary-General for his relentless efforts, for the clarity of his voice, for having upheld his sacred mission to stand up for the UN Charter and for the protection of civilians by calling early on, and ever since, for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. Allow me also to thank through him the United Nations for their humanitarian efforts. The UN has been the subject of despicable attacks for honouring its mandate as formulated by Member States. It is the duty of Member States to reject and put an end to such attacks, especially at a time where UN personnel on the ground are also victims, many killed, wounded and displaced.

Mr. President,

In two months, Israel has killed 17000 Palestinians including 7000 children  
It wounded over 40,000 Palestinians  
It displaced 1.9 million Palestinians  
It destroyed 2/3rd of their homes  
It attacked and besieged and destroyed and neutralized virtually all the hospitals  
It bombed the bakeries  
It attacked UN shelters  
It attacked journalists  
It cut off the electricity  
It placed every possible impediment on humanitarian aid and access

And we are all supposed to pretend that this aggression is not aimed at the destruction of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip when it has besieged and bombed our people and deprived them of all the requirements of life.

I keep reading in the media Israel has no clear war objectives. Are we supposed to pretend we don't know the objective is the ethnic cleansing of the Gaza Strip, the dispossession and forcible displacement of the Palestinian people when so many Israeli representatives could not refrain from admitting it.

If you are against the destruction and displacement of the Palestinian people, you have to be in favor of an immediate ceasefire.

When you refuse to call for a ceasefire you are refusing to call for the only thing that can put an end to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. This is how Israel is conducting the war, through atrocities.

You can keep calling on it to protect civilians, to uphold the laws of war, to allow humanitarian aid in, it will keep toying with you, fooling you, forcing you to discuss the number of trucks while people still can't get food, water, medicine. It will keep telling you if people only heeded its calls to head South they would have been safe while bombing them in the South, and now telling you it is creating imaginary safe zones while it continues killing people everywhere.

It will explain to you that all of Gaza is a military target, that everyone in Gaza can be killed since they are either terrorists or human shields. Enough. Enough.

If two months of dehumanization and lies and massacres are not enough to make you understand Israel's plan, what will? Regardless how good your intentions are, how genuine your efforts are, this is the moment of truth.

The shame is not on those calling for a ceasefire in the face of such atrocities. It haunts those refusing to do so.

Israel's objective is clear, it is to force people out and regardless how many times some say it will not happen, everything confirms we were right from day one. We told you they will make Gaza unlivable for all, that they will displace the people, that they were pushing them south and killing them in the process and that eventually they will launch a full-fledged attack on the south to push people out. When facts show we are right, no one should persist in saying they could somehow allow this war to continue but be against its true objectives.

This war is part of the assault to end the Palestinian people as a nation and to destroy the question of Palestine. If you do not share this objective you must stand against the war.

The person leading this assault would sacrifice the Palestinian people and the Israeli people for his political survival and is a sworn enemy of the two-state solution. His entire life has been dedicated to the annihilation of the Palestinian people and peace. He has been searching for an opportunity to put a definitive end to the national aspirations of the Palestinian people and to the aspirations for peace among Palestinians and Israelis.

This is Netanyahu's war, This is the war of the extremist coalition in power in Israel, no one should get sucked into it any further. It's aim is not security, it's aim is to prevent forever any prospect of Palestinian independence and of peace. These intentions are clear in the Gaza Strip as well as in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

No one should pretend there is any question regarding the criminal nature of this assault. No one should pretend that those launching the bombs everywhere care at all about people held captive. No one should pretend that this war is targeting Hamas when almost all its victims are civilians, when 70% of those killed are women and children.

Mr. President,

We have hostages held by Israel as a means to terrorize and pressure our people, children, women, men of all ages, by the thousands, including these days those abducted in Gaza, humiliated and paraded in the streets.

We have two million hostages in the Gaza Strip. Our civilians have been attacked repeatedly. Our security and our very existence is under threat, are we allowed to do what Israel does?

The law should be upheld for everyone and against anyone. The same law that protects all civilian life. There is no hierarchy of races, or faith or nationalities. No one should take example from the horrors of the

Second World War to justify horrors today. Everything we built as humanity after the Second World War was to prevent these horrors. Now they are taking place in Gaza, displayed on the screens of the entire world, and the war criminals conducting it have no shame, and instead of being blamed are blaming everyone else, attacking everyone.

The Secretary General who is upholding his sacred mission, who is standing by the UN Charter, they are attacking States who are refusing to be complicit with such crimes, including their allies. They are attacking UN officials, the UN agencies and humanitarian and human rights organizations performing their duty in the most impossible of circumstances.

They are bullying, intimidating, all those who stand for the rule of international law, because they believe there is an international law specific to them, that allows them to commit atrocities. How can this be allowed to continue? It cant. It has to stop. Israeli exceptionalism has to end. Now.

Stop rewriting international law to fit Israeli crimes and stop calling for respect for international law while supporting an assault that has torn it into shreds.

The Palestinian people will not die in silence. The Palestinian people will not die in vain. The Palestinian people deserve respect, every people does but we have earned it, we have paid the heaviest of price to earn it, we have survived every attempt to annihilate us over a century, with barely any means. Show us respect not in words but in deeds. Show respect to our lives, to our rights..

This is a moment in history, one where everyone will be asked where they stood, and that will determine who they truly are and what they really stand for. The entire international law lies on one premise nothing justifies atrocities. This is an atrocity assault. When faced with atrocities it is not your right to call for them to end, it is your obligation.

Save lives. Save lives. Heed that call by billions around the world, by an overwhelming majority of States from across the globe, let the most noble human instinct carry us, the instinct to preserve life. There is no role more important for this Council than to save civilian life. 2.3 million Palestinians are fighting for their lives as we speak, every single day. Tell them, show them, help is on the way.

We call on you, in the name of humanity, in the name of justice, in the name of peace, to vote for a ceasefire by supporting the resolution presented by the UAE as Arab representative on the Security Council. We thank all those cosponsoring it from across the globe.

What is happening in Palestine now and what will happen next will determine the future of our region for generations to come, will impact relations and perceptions across the world for generations to come. This is time for courage and decisiveness. Time is up.