

17 November 2023

Mr. Volker Türk,
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Addressing the Looming Genocide in Gaza: An Urgent Call to Action

Dear Mr. Türk,

We, Palestine Independent Commission for Human Rights, Palestinian Human Rights Organizations, and Civil Society Organizations, write to you with an urgent and grave concern regarding the situation in Gaza, as highlighted by the recent statement issued by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967 along with 20 thematic special procedures on 16 November 2023. In their statement, these experts warned of "genocide in the making" in Gaza, citing grave violations committed by Israel against Palestinians, particularly in the aftermath of 7 October.

As the highest-ranking United Nations official responsible for promoting and protecting the enjoyment and full realization of human rights for all people, we urge you to adopt the position expressed by the Special Rapporteur and the thematic special procedures. The situation demands that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights acknowledge the reality of what is occurring in Gaza. It is time to abandon diplomatic and political language and recognize the situation for what it truly is: 'genocide in the making'.

The statement by the experts presents compelling evidence of increasing genocidal incitement, a clear intent to "destroy the Palestinian people under occupation," calls for a 'second Nakba' in Gaza and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, and the use of powerful weaponry with inherently indiscriminate impacts, resulting in a devastating loss of life and destruction of life-sustaining infrastructure.

We wish to emphasize your crucial mandate as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which encompasses actively working to eliminate obstacles to the realization of human rights and preventing the persistence of human rights violations. Failing to address this pressing and critical issue not only undermines the credibility of the United Nations but also compromises its unwavering commitment to upholding human rights principles universally and without discrimination.

We urgently and unequivocally demand that you take immediate, decisive action and align your stance with the resolute voices of independent experts who have already spoken out. The dire situation in Gaza requires a robust and unwavering response.

Sincerely,

The National Human Rights Institution in Palestine

1. Palestine Independent Commission for Human Rights

Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council:

2. Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association
3. Al Mezan Center for Human Rights
4. Al-Haq, Law in the Service of Man
5. Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights "Hurriyat"
6. Defense for Children International – Palestine
7. Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center
8. Muwatin Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (Observer Member)
9. Palestinian Centre for Human Rights

Civil Society Organizations:

10. Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO) – A coalition of 132 Palestinian civil society organizations
11. The Palestinian Youth Association for Leadership and Rights Activation (PYALARA)
12. The Palestinian Association for Empowerment and Local Development (REFORM)
13. The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy - MIFTAH
14. A.M. Qattan Foundation
15. AMAN: Coalition for Accountability and Integrity
16. The Civil Commission for the Independence of Judiciary and Rule of Law (ISTIQLAL)
17. Filastiniyat
18. Union of Palestinian Women Committees UPWC
19. Arab World Democracy and Electoral Monitor (AlMarsad)
20. Faisal Husseini Foundation
21. Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling WCLAC
22. MUSAWA- The Palestinian Center for the Independence of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession
23. Bisan Center for Research and Development
24. The Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA)
25. Women's Studies Centre
26. Sharek youth Forum
27. Women's Affairs Technical Committee
28. Teacher Creativity Center
29. Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC)
30. Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS"
31. Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development PWWSD
32. Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees