



General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 June 2025

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-ninth session

16 June–11 July 2025

Agenda item 7

**Human rights situation in Palestine and other
occupied Arab territories**

**Joint written statement* submitted by Association Ma'onah
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Educational Development, Inc., World Peace Council, non-
governmental organizations on the roster**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is
circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[02 June 2025]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Addressing Humanitarian Aid in Gaza

Introduction

The humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, particularly the Gaza Strip, has reached an unprecedented level of crisis. Amid ongoing hostilities and widespread destruction, Israel's complete blockade of humanitarian aid since March 2025 has pushed Gaza's population into conditions of mass starvation, dehydration, and medical collapse. This is not a logistical failure but a calculated campaign of deprivation that violates the most basic principles of international humanitarian and human rights law.

The denial of food, water, fuel, and medical supplies has been compounded by repeated attacks on aid convoys and humanitarian personnel. Humanitarian access has become not only politicised but dangerous. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories recently described this strategy as the weaponisation of humanitarian aid. Her warning, echoed by other United Nations bodies, underscores the gravity of the current moment: the aid blockade is not merely obstructing assistance but threatening the survival of an entire population.

Humanitarian aid must never be used as a tool of coercion. Its denial is not only immoral, it is illegal. UN Member States must act to restore full access, protect humanitarian personnel, and ensure accountability for these violations.

The Weaponisation of Humanitarian Aid

The denial of humanitarian aid in the Gaza strip is not an unintended consequence of conflict. It is a calculated measure imposed with the intent to subjugate and dismantle an already besieged civilian population. The current blockade has not only obstructed the delivery of life-saving food, water, medicine, and fuel, but has done so in a manner that systematically weaponises relief against those most in need of it.

This strategy has been implemented through a combination of administrative obstacles and acts of violence against relief operations. Humanitarian convoys have been routinely delayed or denied entry under claims of security concerns or dual-use regulations, resulting in shortages of essentials including baby formula, insulin, and water purification tablets. Aid warehouses and distribution sites have been repeatedly targeted in airstrikes, and humanitarian workers have been killed while attempting to carry out protected activities. These actions have rendered humanitarian operations nearly impossible.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories has described this systematic obstruction as the weaponisation of humanitarian aid. In her statement of 30 May 2025, she warned that these actions are not merely violations of international law, but deliberate tactics to exert control by starvation. Franchesca Albanese's assessment is not isolated. Earlier this month, the UN committee on the elimination of Racial Discrimination condemned the halt to food aid, asserting that hunger must never be used as a tool of war or racial discrimination.

By denying access to essential supplies, the occupying power is violating core tenets of international humanitarian law. Under the Fourth Geneva Convention, it is obligated to ensure the provision of food and medical care to the population under its control. Article 49 further affirms that impartial humanitarian relief must be permitted when the population is inadequately supplied. The deliberate failure to meet these obligations constitutes a grave breach and may amount to the war crime of collective punishment under customary international law and the Rome Statute.

The international community must treat the obstruction of humanitarian aid with the urgency it demands. These violations, already recognised by the Special Rapporteur and other United Nations committees, require not only condemnation but immediate corrective measures. The cost of inaction will be measured in lives lost, infrastructure destroyed, and legal norms further eroded. There is no excuse for delay.

The Human Cost: Starvation and Health Collapse

The blockade of humanitarian aid has produced a collapse of essential services in the Gaza Strip, resulting in a widespread human crisis with disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable groups. The denial of supplies has transformed preventable conditions into life-threatening emergencies. Hospitals, already overwhelmed and under-equipped, are unable to treat the wounded or care for chronically ill patients. Families face impossible choices between searching for water, securing food, or staying alive during bombardment. The cost of these choices is being paid most acutely by children.

According to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, the continuing blockade risks claiming the lives of many more children in the coming months. It warned that up to 71,000 children under the age of five are projected to suffer from acute malnutrition over the next year if aid remains obstructed. This is unacceptable, as the committee recalled: “the right to food is a fundamental human right, intrinsically linked to the right to life, and as such, it is non-derogable under international law.”

Medical professionals are reporting children arriving at hospitals with visible signs of starvation, dehydration, and trauma. Due to the lack of fuel and functioning equipment, hospitals are having to turn patients away and are prioritising who receives care. According to the World Health Organisation, as of February this year only half of Gaza's hospitals are currently even partially operational. Access to clean water is almost nonexistent in the north of Gaza, where sanitation infrastructure has been destroyed. Many households are surviving on contaminated water, leading to the rapid spread of disease, diarrheal infections, respiratory complications, and untreated wounds which are now among the leading causes of death among children.

The cumulative impact of these conditions has effectively erased the protections guaranteed to civilians under international humanitarian law. Gaza's civilian population is being denied the means to survive. The right to life, the right to health, and the right to dignity are not abstract principles. They are legal obligations, and their violation has turned daily life into a struggle against engineered deprivation.

Analysis and International Obligations

Humanitarian access is increasingly treated as a matter of political discretion, rather than the legal obligation it is under international law. In Gaza, mechanisms purporting to deliver aid have become tools for containment and control. Reports of attacks on civilians gathering at distribution sites, the killing of aid workers, and the manipulation of delivery routes reveal an operational environment that is hostile by design.

In the OHCHR 30 May report, the way in which this “humanitarian” camouflage enables continued violations under the guise of assistance is described. Aid efforts are instrumentalised to distract from international scrutiny, while the fundamental protections of civilian life are stripped away. The establishment of military controlled distribution systems, such as the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, has not restored access, but reinforced exclusion.

These practices strike at the humanitarian mandate. The delivery of food and medical assistance should never be contingent on compliance with the political aims of an occupying power. Nor should aid distribution become an occasion for violence against those in need. What is being witnessed in Gaza is not only a failure to uphold international humanitarian law, but a distortion of it.

The international community must no longer accept this erosion of humanitarian norms as collateral damage. The protections enshrined in international law are not aspirational. They are binding, and their breach carries consequences. The credibility of the humanitarian system, and of the legal order that upholds it, depends on firm action and accountability.

We therefore affirm our support for the Special Rapporteur's findings and stress the urgency of her call for principled action. Her warnings reflect the reality on the ground: that humanitarian norms are not only being disregarded, but manipulated to facilitate further harm. This must be met with immediate international response.

Recommendations

The situation in the Gaza strip is catastrophic. The deliberate obstruction of humanitarian aid, combined with the collapse of essential services, has placed the civilian population in immediate peril. This cannot be normalised and must not be ignored.

We therefore submit the following urgent recommendations to the Council:

1. Ensure Immediate and Unhindered Humanitarian Access

Call for the immediate lifting of all barriers obstructing humanitarian aid to Gaza. Demand that humanitarian convoys be granted safe, unimpeded passage, in accordance with international law.

2. Protect Humanitarian Personnel and Infrastructure

Condemn all attacks on aid workers and facilities. Urge Member States to support measures that ensure accountability for such violations.

3. End Politicised and Militarised Aid Mechanisms

Reaffirm the importance of humanitarian principles: neutrality, impartiality, independence and reject any aid frameworks that compromise them, including systems operating under military oversight.

4. Uphold International Legal Obligations

Recognise the obstruction of aid as a potential war crime. Support independent investigations into violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

5. Establish an Independent Protection Mechanism

Echo the Special Rapporteur's call to create a mechanism ensuring safe, consistent humanitarian access, independent of the occupying power's control.

6. Impose an Immediate Arms Embargo

Urge Member States to suspend all arms transfers and military assistance to Israel where there is risk of facilitating serious violations of international law.

7. Address Structural Causes of the Crisis

Emphasise the need for a long-term solution grounded in international law, including the end of occupation, the lifting of the blockade, and the fulfilment of Palestinian rights to dignity, justice, and self-determination.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ), Arab Lawyers Association-UK, Human Rights Defenders (HRD), Brussels Tribunal, Iraqi Committee for Human Rights (ICHR), Association of Humanitarian Lawyers (AHL), Association of Human Rights Defenders in Iraq (AHRD), Organization for Justice & Democracy in Iraq (OJDI), NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.