IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee

Statement by Principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

These atrocities must end

23 September 2024

NEW YORK/GENEVA/ROME/WASHINGTON – As world leaders gather in New York for the 79th United Nations General Assembly, and as the threat of a wider regional escalation looms, we renew our demand for an end to the appalling human suffering and humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.

We mourn the loss of innocent life everywhere, including those killed on October 7 and during the 11 months of conflict since then.

We urgently call for a sustained, immediate and unconditional ceasefire. This is the only way to end the suffering of civilians and save lives.

All hostages and all those arbitrarily detained must be released immediately and unconditionally.

Humanitarians must have safe and unimpeded access to those in need.

We cannot do our jobs in the face of overwhelming need and ongoing violence. More than 41,000 Palestinians in Gaza – the majority of them civilians, including women, children, older persons and at times entire families – have reportedly been killed, and more than 95,500 have been injured, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza. It is estimated that a quarter of the injured in Gaza, or around 22,500 people, will require lifelong specialized rehabilitation and assistive care including individuals with severe limb injuries, amputations, spinal cord damage, traumatic brain injuries, and major burns.

More than 2 million Palestinians are without protection, food, water, sanitation, shelter, health care, education, electricity and fuel – the basic necessities to survive. Families have been forcibly displaced, time and time again, from one unsafe place to the next, with no way out.

Women and girls' dignity, safety, health and rights have been severely compromised.

The risk of famine persists with all 2.1 million residents still in urgent need of food and livelihood assistance as humanitarian access remains restricted.

Healthcare has been decimated. More than 500 attacks on health care have been recorded in Gaza.

Aid hubs have been forced to relocate and re-build many times over; convoys carrying life-saving aid have been shot at, delayed and denied access; and relief workers have been killed in

unprecedented numbers. The number of aid workers killed in Gaza in the past year is the highest ever in a single crisis.

Unnecessary and disproportionate force unleashed in the West Bank, combined with escalating settler violence, house demolitions, forced displacement and discriminatory movement restrictions, have caused increased fatalities and casualties.

The war is also jeopardizing the future for all Palestinians and rendering eventual recovery far from reach.

Meanwhile, close to 100 hostages remain in Gaza, while freed hostages have reported ill treatment, including sexual violence.

The parties' conduct over the last year makes a mockery of their claim to adhere to international humanitarian law and the minimum standards of humanity that it demands.

Civilians must be protected and their essential needs must be met. There must be accountability for serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Humanitarian and aid organizations have been doing their utmost to provide relief in Gaza and the West Bank, often at great personal risk, and with many aid workers paying the ultimate price.

Our capacity to deliver is indisputable if we are granted the access we need. The first round of the polio vaccination campaign, reaching more than 560,000 children under the age of 10, is but one example. The second round of vaccinations must be carried out safely and reach all children in Gaza.

We urge world leaders, once again, to wield their influence to ensure respect for international humanitarian law, international human rights law and the rulings of the International Court of Justice – through diplomatic pressure and cooperation in ending impunity.

Let us be clear: The protection of civilians is a bedrock principle for the global community and in all countries' interest. Allowing the abhorrent, downward spiral caused by this war in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to continue will have unimaginable, global consequences.

These atrocities must end.

Signatories[1]:

- Ms. Joyce Msuya, Acting Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- Ms. Sofia Sprechmann Sineiro, Secretary General, **CARE International**
- Dr. Qu Dongyu, Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**)
- Ms. Amy E. Pope, Director General, International Organization for Migration (**IOM**)
- Mr. Tom Hart, President and Chief Executive Officer, **InterAction**

[1] The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) fully supports the statement and the call by Principals of the IASC, for a sustained, immediate and unconditional ceasefire.

- Ms. Tjada D'Oyen McKenna, Chief Executive Officer, **Mercy Corps**
- Mr. Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (**OHCHR**)
- Ms. Paula Gaviria Betancur, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (**SR on HR of IDPs**)
- Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (**UNDP**)
- Ms. Janti Soeripto, President and Chief Executive Officer, **Save the Children US**
- Ms. Anacláudia Rossbach, Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlement Programme (**UN-Habitat**)
- Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (**UNHCR**)
- Dr. Natalia Kanem, Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (**UNFPA**)
- Ms. Catherine Russell, Executive Director, UN Children's Fund (**UNICEF**)
- Ms. Sima Bahous, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, **UN Women**
- Ms. Cindy McCain, Executive Director, World Food Programme (**WFP**)
- Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization (**WHO**)