



AHRI Statement on the War in Gaza

As the international **Association of Human Rights Institutes (AHRI)**, we cannot remain silent in the face of the extremely high and increasing toll in civilian casualties (including women and children) in Gaza.

Wars are making a frightening comeback in the world today. AHRI is strongly aware that there are many armed conflicts in the world that deserve the international community's attention and humanitarian help, including the conflicts in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Myanmar, Sudan, Ukraine (see AHRI's 2022 [statement](#)) and Yemen.

Since the horrific attacks by Hamas and other non-state groupings on 7 October 2023, which resulted in the killings of more than 1,100 people and the taking of about 250 hostages, we receive daily news about the events in Gaza and the escalating conflict between Israel and Hamas. At the beginning of April 2024 over 75,000 people have been injured in Gaza, and over 33,000 deaths have been recorded, of which at least 9,000 are women and at least 14,000 children. AHRI deplores all attacks against civilians and civilian objects, as well as all violence, acts of terrorism and hostilities against civilians, which are prohibited under international law.

As human rights scholars, we must stress that International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law must be respected under all circumstances and irrespective of the contexts of a conflict.

Currently, 1.1 million people, half of the population in the Gaza strip, experience [catastrophic food insecurity](#). Pregnant and breast-feeding women and young children are particularly impacted (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification [IPC], "[Famine Review Committee: Gaza Strip](#)", March 2024, page 8; IPC, "[IPC Global Initiative - Special Brief](#)", March 2024, page 17). Importantly, in its [Order of 28 March 2024](#), the International Court of Justice (ICJ) observes that Palestinians in Gaza are no longer facing only a risk of famine, as noted in the Court's [Order of 26 January 2024](#), but that famine is actually setting in, with United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reporting that at least 31 people, including 27 children, have already died of malnutrition and dehydration (OCHA, "[Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel — reported impact, Day 169](#)", 25 March 2024). The urgent need to address the human rights concerns raised by the situation in Gaza has been raised by multiple UN special procedures as well as the [UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#).

The ICJ [Order of 28 March 2024](#) requests Israel "[i]n conformity with its obligations under the Genocide Convention, and in view of the worsening conditions of life faced by Palestinians in Gaza, in particular the spread of famine and starvation," to "(a) take all necessary and effective measures to ensure, without delay, in full co-operation with the United Nations, the unhindered provision at scale by all concerned of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance, including food, water, electricity, fuel, shelter, clothing, hygiene and sanitation requirements, as well as medical supplies and medical care to Palestinians throughout Gaza,

including by increasing the capacity and number of land crossing points and maintaining them open for as long as necessary; and (b) ensure with immediate effect that its military does not commit acts which constitute a violation of any of the rights of the Palestinians in Gaza as a protected group under the Genocide Convention, including by preventing, through any action, the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance” (para. 45).

The ICJ further states in its [Order of 28 March 2024](#) “that the catastrophic situation in the Gaza Strip confirms the need for immediate and effective implementation of the measures indicated in its Order of 26 January 2024” (para. 46). The Court also reiterates its “call for [the] immediate and unconditional release” of the hostages abducted during the attack in Israel on 7 October 2023 (para. 50).

For its part, [United Nations Security Council Resolution 2728 of 25 March 2024](#), “demands the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages” (para. 1) and “[e]mphasizes the urgent need to expand the flow of humanitarian assistance to and reinforce the protection of civilians in the entire Gaza Strip”, while reiterating its “demand for the lifting of all barriers to the provision of humanitarian assistance at scale, in line with international humanitarian law” and its earlier resolutions (para. 2). UNSC Resolution 2728 (2024) also demanded “an immediate ceasefire for the month of Ramadan” (para. 1) which, however, has not been followed.

AHRI considers UN Security Council Resolution 2728 to be legally binding upon all parties in the conflict. Should it not be implemented in a timely and bona fide manner, the United Nations has the responsibility to take action, which might include adopting measures under [Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter](#), aimed at facilitating a lasting and sustainable peace. In the same vein, AHRI calls for the strict implementation of the Orders which the ICJ issued on [26 January 2024](#) and on [28 March 2024](#). As the ICJ emphasized on 26 January 2024, “all parties to the conflict in the Gaza Strip are bound by international humanitarian law” (para. 85).

Statement adopted by the Executive Committee/Board of the Association of Human Rights Institutes, 12 April 2024