

Statement by ESCWA introducing the Note of the Secretary-General on
The Economic and Social Repercussions of the Israeli Occupation
Economic and Social Council –Management Segment 30 July 2025

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates,

I have the honor of presenting the Note of the Secretary-General on “the Economic and Social Repercussions of the Israeli Occupation on the Living Conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab Population in the Occupied Syrian Golan.”

On behalf of ESCWA, allow me first to express our sincere gratitude to our colleagues within the United Nations system, whose valuable contributions made this report possible.

The report was finalized as hostilities resumed in Gaza following the end of the ceasefire (18 March 2025), amid continued deterioration in the West Bank.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates,

Since 7 October 2023 until March 2025, over 50,000 Palestinians (mostly women and children) have been killed, and more than 113,000 have been injured in Gaza, according to the Ministry of Health.

Israeli sources report that over 1,700 Israelis and foreign nationals, including women and children, have also lost their lives. Of the 251 people taken hostage, 59 remain in captivity.

Tragically, at least 407 aid workers, including 284 UN staff, have been killed in the conflict.

During the reporting period a total of 469 Palestinians, including 76 children, were killed in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Israeli sources reported 42 Israelis killed, including 3 children and 18 women, in attacks by Palestinians.

The UN verified nearly 8,000 grave violations against over 4,200 Palestinian children in Gaza and the West Bank. These include killings, injuries, forced recruitment, and denial of aid. The psychological impact - displacement, trauma, and loss - will scar generations.

The destruction of Gaza’s physical rehabilitation infrastructure has left over 4,500 amputees, including 810 children, without access to prosthetics or rehabilitation services.

Gaza has recorded the highest per capita rate of child amputees globally.

The mental health crisis across Gaza and the West Bank has reached alarming levels. Nearly all of Gaza’s 1.2 million children require mental health and psychosocial support, with many exhibiting signs of acute psychological trauma. Over 17,000 children have been separated from their families.

Since November 2023, thousands of Palestinians, mostly men and boys, but also women and girls, have been detained by Israeli forces in Gaza. Many were taken without charges or trial, including doctors, journalists, and human rights defenders.

Alarming reports, also received by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, detail torture, abuse, and inhumane treatment, such as waterboarding, sexual violence, and attacks by dogs. At least 53 detainees have died in Israeli custody since October 2023.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates,

Over 70 percent of Gaza's civilian infrastructure has been destroyed, displacing nearly 1.9 million people, many of whom have been displaced repeatedly, some ten times or more.

In the occupied West Bank, entire neighborhoods in Jenin, Tulkarm, and Nur Shams refugee camps have been demolished during so-called security operations, displacing nearly 39,000 people without alternative shelter.

Israel's Defence Minister has publicly stated that displaced Palestinians will not be allowed to return to their homes in the occupied West Bank.

In the West Bank's Area C, settler violence and land confiscations have displaced about 1,700 Palestinians. Reports indicate that violent settler attacks appear aimed at forcing Palestinians from their fertile agricultural land.

In East Jerusalem, thousands of Palestinians remain at risk of forced eviction.

Palestinian movement in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, remains severely restricted by over 800 checkpoints, roadblocks, settlements, and the 712-kilometre Barrier. This system fragments communities, cuts off access to farmland, schools, and hospitals, and threatens Palestinian livelihoods, rights, and daily life.

Since 2 March 2025, Israel imposed a "blocking of the entry" of all humanitarian aid and commercial supplies into the Gaza Strip, the longest ban since the start of the war in October 2023.

Food insecurity in Gaza has reached catastrophic and unprecedented levels. In January, approximately 1.84 million people faced acute food insecurity, including famine, starvation and malnutrition.

Israel's military operations in Gaza have inflicted severe environmental damage. Over a third of the coastal zone has been destroyed.

Wastewater treatment has collapsed, with 60,000 cubic meters of sewage discharged daily, threatening public health.

Around 500,000 tonnes of solid waste now cover Gaza, and by the end of 2024, three-quarters of its agricultural land had been damaged or destroyed.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates,

According to ESCWA and UNDP, human development in Gaza has been set back by nearly 70 years, and by 16 years in the West Bank.

Poverty in Gaza has soared to nearly 100 percent, while the economy shrank by 86 percent. Across the West Bank and Gaza, GDP fell by 28 percent in 2024, with total losses exceeding \$5 billion.

Unemployment reached a record 51 percent, 35 percent in the West Bank and 80 percent in Gaza.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority faces a \$2 billion financing gap, worsened by Israel's continued withholding of clearance revenues.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates,

Settlement expansion in the Occupied Syrian Golan continues, with 29,000 Israeli settlers now controlling 95 percent of the land across 35 illegal settlements.

Only five Syrian villages remain, home to 28,000 residents who face curfews, land confiscation, and severe restrictions on movement and development.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates,

The Secretary-General reiterates his urgent call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, the unconditional release of all hostages, and full adherence to international humanitarian and human rights law by all parties to the conflict.

The Secretary-General calls on Member States to increase their support to the humanitarian response and to ensure unimpeded humanitarian access to all those in need.

He underscores that the occupation must end as rapidly as possible. He urges the resolution of the conflict in line with international law, relevant United Nations resolutions and bilateral agreements, in pursuit of the vision of two States.

Thank you.