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NGOs call on all UN Member States to adhere to the ICJ Advisory Opinion on the unlawfulness of Israel's occupation

In July the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued a historic [advisory opinion](#) concluding that Israel's decades long occupation¹ and annexation of Palestinian territory is unlawful because it violates some of the most fundamental tenets of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and denies Palestinians their human rights.

The ICJ opinion also concludes that all states have an "obligation not to recognize as legal the situation arising from the unlawful presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" and "not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by Israel's illegal presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory." Meanwhile, the virtually unconditional transfer and sale of weapons, parts, and ammunition by governments where there is clear risk of use in harming civilians and violating international law has continued.

As the UN General Assembly prepares to vote on a resolution this week that would seek to bring the occupation to an end, the undersigned organizations call on all governments, including the UN Security Council and its members, to adhere to the ICJ's advisory opinion, including through the halting the transfer and sale of weapons, parts and ammunition.

Humanitarian, development and human rights organizations, many of us with decades of experience working throughout the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, delivering lifesaving assistance and other services, have witnessed first-hand the humanitarian

¹ For more on what international humanitarian law says about occupation, please see commentary by [ICRC](#).

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consequences of Israel's occupation, and its devastating impact on the Palestinian population, including the well-being of children. This includes but is not limited to:

- the use of weapons, by Israeli forces and settlers in attacks, including in apparent violations of international law, resulting in the killing and permanent disabilities of Palestinian civilians, including children, and instances of gender based violence;
- the arbitrary detention and systematic prosecution of Palestinians, including children, in Israeli military courts, often held in horrific conditions;
- the forced displacement of Palestinians through demolitions of Palestinian homes and property, Israeli settlement expansion, Israeli settler violence, and so-called "evacuation" orders amid Israeli bombardment in Gaza;
- a discriminatory permit regime that denies freedom of movement to Palestinians, depriving them of basic services, including vital medical assistance.

These practices have taken place without accountability for decades, but the intensification over the last 11 months has led to a staggering humanitarian catastrophe for Palestinians throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, fuelled by the virtually unconditional supply of weapons, parts, and ammunition. More than 40,000 people in Gaza have been killed, and tens of thousands face life-altering injuries and potentially irreversible mental harm, including as a result of apparent violations of IHL. Meanwhile, the situation in the West Bank is deteriorating at a rapid pace, with large-scale Israeli military ground incursions and airstrikes killing and injuring people almost every day this year.

The violence and restrictions under Israeli occupation have rendered the mandates of humanitarian, human rights, and development organizations almost impossible to fulfill. Humanitarian support provided by Member States is regularly obstructed and destroyed by Israeli authorities.

Assistance that humanitarian organizations have managed to provide has been insufficient to address the needs and does not address the root causes of the humanitarian consequences created by Israel's decades-long occupation that the international community has allowed to continue for too long.

Failure to adhere to the ICJ's advisory opinion will send a message that states can be selective in their application of international law. It is imperative that states reinforce and show their commitment to international institutions and the international order that has been in place for nearly 80 years.

The time for empty statements has passed. All Member States must act decisively to adhere to the ICJ Advisory Opinion before more lives are irreparably destroyed.

Undersigned:

1. ActionAid
2. American Friends Service Committee
3. Amnesty International
4. BePax

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5. CCFD-Terre Solidaire
6. Center for Peace Education (Miriam College, Philippines)
7. Christian Aid
8. Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
9. DanChurchAid
10. Danish Refugee Council
11. Finn Church Aid
12. Franciscans International
13. Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) (Secretariat)
14. Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
15. Handicap International/Humanity & Inclusion (HI)
16. Human Concern International
17. Islamic Relief Worldwide
18. Médecins du Monde International Network
19. Mennonite Central Committee
20. Middle East Children's Alliance
21. Norwegian Church Aid
22. Norwegian Refugee Council
23. Oxfam
24. Pax Christi Austria
25. Pax Christi England and Wales
26. Pax Christi International
27. Pax Christi Scotland
28. Pax Christi USA
29. Première Urgence Internationale
30. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
31. Terre des hommes Foundation
32. Terre des Hommes Italy
33. United Church of Christ
34. War Child