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Commission of Inquiry collecting evidence of war crimes committed by all sides in Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories since 7 October 2023

10 October 2023



Non-official UN languages: [Hebrew version \(DOCX\)](#)

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GENEVA (10 October 2023) – There is already clear evidence that war crimes may have been committed in the latest explosion of violence in Israel and Gaza, and all those who have violated international law and targeted civilians must be held accountable for their crimes, the UN Independent International **Commission of Inquiry** on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Israel, said today.

The Commission has been collecting and preserving evidence of war crimes committed by all sides since 7 October 2023, when Hamas launched a complex attack on Israel and Israeli forces responded with airstrikes in Gaza.

Reports that armed groups from Gaza have gunned down hundreds of unarmed civilians are abhorrent and cannot be tolerated. Taking civilian hostages and using civilians as human shields are war crimes.

The Commission is gravely concerned with Israel's latest attack on Gaza and Israel's announcement of a complete siege on Gaza involving the withholding of water, food, electricity and fuel which will undoubtedly cost civilian lives and constitutes collective punishment.

The Commission is intent on ensuring legal accountability, including individual criminal and command responsibility. To that end, the Commission is committed to investigating current events and identifying those responsible for violations of international law on all sides, both those directly committing international crimes and those in positions of

command responsibility. It will continue sharing information collected with the relevant judicial authorities, especially with the International Criminal Court, where the Office of the Prosecutor has already commenced an investigation on the situation of Palestine since 2021.

The Commission is deeply distressed by the mounting violence, and spiralling death toll and underscores the urgency for the parties involved to cease all forms of violence and ensure that civilians are protected.

The Commission urges Israeli security forces and Palestinian armed groups to adhere strictly to international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

The Commission also calls for the unconditional and safe release of all individuals who have been taken hostage by Palestinian armed groups. The taking of hostages is a violation of international law and constitutes an international crime. Persons deprived of liberty are protected against murder, torture, and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and sexual violence.

In line with its previous findings, the Commission emphasises that the only path towards ending violence and achieving sustainable peace is through addressing the root causes of the conflict including through ending the illegal occupation of Palestinian territory and recognising the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

ENDS

Background: The **UN Human Rights Council** mandated the Commission on 27 May 2021 to “investigate, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel, all alleged violations of international humanitarian law and all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law leading up to and since 13 April 2021.”

Resolution A/HRC/RES/S-30/1 further requested the commission of inquiry to “investigate all underlying root causes of recurrent tensions, instability and protraction of conflict, including systematic discrimination and repression based on national, ethnic, racial or religious identity.” The

Commission of Inquiry was mandated to report to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly annually commencing from June 2022 and September 2022, respectively.

More information on the work of the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, can be found at:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/co-israel/index>

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