

UN report says Israel “consistently breached international law” in assault on Gaza

Andre Damon
27 February 2025

Speaking before the Human Rights Council in Geneva, the UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk accused Israel of an “unprecedented disregard for human rights” in waging its assault on Gaza.

“Nothing justifies the appalling manner in which Israel has conducted its military operations in Gaza, which consistently breached international law,” Türk said.

He said that “Israel’s means and methods of warfare have caused staggering levels of casualties and destruction, raising concerns over the commission of war crimes and other possible atrocity crimes.”

Türk’s remarks were an introduction to a 15-page report published this month by the UN Human Rights Office that accused Israel of “war crimes” and “crimes against humanity.”

The report rooted the ongoing onslaught on Gaza in the more than half-century-long illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories by Israel. The report noted:

For more than 57 years, the Occupied Palestinian Territory—the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza—has remained under occupation by Israel, affecting all rights of Palestinians, including the right to self-determination. For over 17 years, Gaza has been subjected to blockades and closures amounting to collective punishment.

The launching of Israel’s assault on Gaza last year led to an unprecedented escalation of crimes against the Palestinian people. The report noted that “the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory worsened to an unprecedented extent, raising concerns

about patterns of systematic violations of principles of international humanitarian law on the conduct of hostilities, many amounting to war crimes.”

The report declared that “the choices by Israel of methods and means of warfare have involved an unprecedented disregard for international humanitarian law and international human rights law ... this raises concerns about the commission of war crimes and other possible atrocity crimes.”

The report documented, in systematic detail, multiple instances in which entire areas of Gaza were totally demolished in operations that killed hundreds of people. It noted:

The Israel Defense Forces conducted a major operation in Al Shifa medical complex in Gaza City between 18 March and 1 April 2024, including airstrikes and shelling, completely destroying the hospital facilities and severely damaging the surrounding residential area. At least 175 buildings were destroyed, and another 52 severely damaged within a 1-km radius of the medical complex between 1 and 31 March 2024.

In another massive bombardment, an “Israeli operation in Jabalya camp in North Gaza, a densely populated area of 1.4 square kilometers, between 11 and 31 May 2024, largely leveled parts of the camp and likely destroyed or damaged 460 buildings.”

The report alleges that Israel’s policies of systematic withholding of food and other necessities of life from the population of Gaza “appear to indicate that the Israeli military is conducting mass forcible transfer

with the possible goal of permanently displacing Palestinians from, at least, northern Gaza.”

The report declares that:

starvation as a method of warfare is prohibited by international law and constitutes a war crime. It may also constitute one of several crimes against humanity.

The report noted the incidence of “sexual violence in the context of detention” by the Israeli military. It noted that at least nine Israeli reservists are “accused of sexually abusing and torturing a Palestinian man detained at Sde Teiman military camp in Israel, as allegedly shown in a leaked video published by Israeli media.”

The report noted that “Palestinian journalists in Gaza continued to be killed in record numbers” and that 174 journalists and media workers have been killed by Israel since October 7.

The UN report comes as US and Israeli officials continue their incitement for the ethnic cleansing of Gaza. Last week, Nissim Vaturi, a member of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s Likud, called for the mass execution of Palestinian men. “The children and women must be separated, and the adults in Gaza must be eliminated. We are being too considerate,” he said. He subsequently called the people of Gaza “subhumans.”

On Tuesday, US President Donald Trump shared an AI-generated video showing Gaza turned into a Trump-branded resort called “Trump Gaza.” The video featured a golden statue of Trump on the coast of Gaza and footage of Trump and Netanyahu sunbathing on the coast next to the fictional resort.

The White House has meanwhile announced that far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, one of the first figures in the Israeli government to openly call for the ethnic cleansing of Gaza, will be invited to meet with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent in Washington next Wednesday.

Smotrich, along with former National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, had been advocating for the ethnic cleansing of Gaza for over a year. In 2024, Smotrich told Israel’s Channel 12, “We want to

encourage willful emigration, and we need to find countries willing to take them [the Palestinians] in. We cannot withdraw from any territory we are in in the Gaza Strip.”

To date, 60,000 people have been killed in the Gaza genocide, and the implementation of any such plan would require a level of genocidal violence on a scale even greater than what has been carried out to date.

The plan by Smotrich and Ben-Gvir has, in fact, always been the plan of the Netanyahu government in perpetrating the Gaza genocide, despite the Biden administration’s claim to be seeking a “two-state solution.” The crimes documented by the UN Human Rights Council’s report were carried out with the weapons, money and political support provided by the Biden administration.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact