

CALL FOR UNSC RESOLUTION 2720 IMMEDIATE FOLLOW-UP

To world leaders and heads of international organizations: We are in shock and outrage at the dire crisis in Gaza. We implore you to take immediate, decisive action. This is a crucial moment to avert a greater catastrophe and uphold human dignity and peace.

The world at large stood still in disbelief and condemnation of the massacre by Hamas on 7 October 2023, including the horrendous murders, rapes, and hostage-taking of Israeli and other nationality civilians. Evocations of centuries of vulnerability, not just the genocide of the Shoah/Holocaust which killed half the world's Jewish population, remind us of our collective responsibility to prevent such massacres and any genocide anywhere, as well as any additional inflaming of already persistent antisemitism.

Sympathy and support for Israel's right to self-defence have been willfully mis-interpreted, though, by the current Israeli government's need for security and its waging of a massive campaign of collective punishment by destruction, devastation and displacement of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. This is unacceptable and must stop immediately. Against the lessons of their own tragic history, the Israelis have allowed themselves to become the instrument of prolonged repression of the civil and individual rights of generations of Palestinians living under the yoke of occupation since 1967.

Against this background, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2720 on Friday, 22 December 2023, demanding rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access, along with the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. The calls in the resolution have gone unheeded by both warring parties. Israel continues to bombard non-combatant civilian infrastructure, eliminate entire families and inflict massive suffering in its campaign of retribution against Hamas that affects all Palestinians in Gaza, and indeed in the West Bank. Hamas, on its part, continues to retaliate with attacks on Israel and refuses to hand over the remaining hostages.

It is imperative that the United Nations and its agencies and partners be fully enabled to implement their part of UNSC res. 2720 and provide urgently-needed humanitarian assistance to the population of Gaza. Moreover, the dire situation and the imminent danger of Palestinian civilian starvation and disease call for the utilization of assets like helicopters to circumvent the destruction of roads and other infrastructure. We believe this approach would be a pragmatic and effective method to expedite the delivery of much- and vitally-needed aid throughout the Gaza Strip.

None of this can happen realistically without a total and immediate ceasefire followed by a colossal humanitarian mobilization.

The primary onus of responsibility for achieving a ceasefire lies with the warring parties, namely the Israeli government and the Hamas leadership. Special responsibility is also borne by the United States and Iran, the respective main backers of the belligerents. They must use all political, military and economic leverage they possess to bring home to the parties the imperative of a robust and complete ceasefire immediately, on absolute humanitarian grounds.

An immediate ceasefire followed by a massive humanitarian mobilization are necessary to save the lives of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian civilians, who have reached the limits of their endurance and are under imminent threat of psychological collapse, starvation, thirst and disease.

Nobody with any remaining conscience and humanity should allow this to happen, and the governments and leaders addressed via this call have the primary responsibility to act swiftly.

Once the humanitarian situation has stabilized and the ceasefire holds, all parties must return to the broader negotiating table and progress rapidly towards the full implementation of the two-state solution, as demanded in UN Security Council resolution 2720 and numerous other Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

NOTE: This urgent call was initiated by the Peacemaking Reflection Group of former UN system staff ([PRG](#)) but is open for signing by other individuals and institutions too. To add your or your institution's signature, please use this [electronic signature form](#). Irrespective of whether you sign the form or not, if you agree with its message please circulate it as widely as possible, acknowledging its source. Feel free to draw on the call to produce your own statement or article adapted to your own language or tradition. Acknowledgement / crediting of the source, as indicated above, would again be appreciated.