23rd June 2025

59th session of the UN Human Rights Council

Item 3 – Interactive dialogue with the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide

On behalf of Defence for Children International (DCI) - Palestine

For Palestinian children and families, the time to discuss the prevention of genocide is long gone, and the time to end it is now. Israeli forces' clearly articulated campaign of genocide has raged on for more than 20 months. In this time, Israeli forces have killed or maimed more than 50,000 Palestinian children in Gaza, according to UNICEF, and now, every child in Gaza is facing starvation by way of prolonged malnutrition and dehydration as a result of Israel's siege.

Right now, every child in Gaza is hungry. Their hunger is no accident: Israeli officials and military forces have deliberately blocked access to safe and abundant access to humanitarian aid, efforts that have ranged from a complete blockade of the Gaza Strip to killing Palestinians in need attempting to get food and water.

The short-term and long-term impacts of starvation on a child are well-documented. Childhood malnutrition causes permanent stunting, academic and behavioural difficulties, and weak immune systems that make children susceptible to infectious diseases. Malnourished children are also more likely to develop high blood pressure, metabolic syndrome, diabetes, and other lifelong conditions as they age. The starvation occurring in Gaza right now will impact Palestinian children and their families for generations to come.

Even one child suffering from starvation is no accident. One million children enduring a calculated starvation campaign carried out by an occupying power is nothing short of genocide.

As the only Palestinian organisation dedicated solely to defending Palestinian children's rights, we condemn the lack of meaningful action from the international community and demand immediate protection for the starving children of Gaza.

We demand the Special Adviser, in addition to all member states:

- **Immediately act to break Israel's siege on the Gaza Strip** by ensuring the safe, unhindered delivery and access of substantial humanitarian aid to every Palestinian in need;
- **Call for an immediate and comprehensive arms embargo** on Israel, and apply coordinated diplomatic and financial pressure to compel Israeli authorities and forces to end the ongoing genocide in Gaza, dismantle the system of apartheid, and cease the military occupation of the occupied Palestinian territory;
- **Safeguard the independence and integrity of investigations** conducted by the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, which are essential for ensuring accountability. This includes unequivocally condemning any sanctions, punitive threats, or actions directed at members of these Courts;
- **Utilise all available mechanisms, including those outlined above, to demand that Israeli authorities respect and protect the rights of Palestinian children**, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Israel is a State Party; and
- **End all forms of complicity, including financial and diplomatic support, that sustain the Israeli system of apartheid**.

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