

**The UN CEDAW Committee calls for a ceasefire and a peaceful and lasting resolution to the war in Gaza/the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel**

On this 125th day of war in Gaza, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (the Committee) appeals for an immediate and sustained ceasefire to halt violence and loss of lives, and destruction of infrastructure and property and a return to a constructive peace dialogue to agree on actions to bring about lasting peace and security that involves the leadership and decision-making of both Israeli and Palestinian women.

The Committee deplores the high toll of victims and calls upon all parties to the conflict to abide by the rule of law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law and reaffirm their commitment to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (the Convention) and its preamble, General Recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations of the Committee, as well as Security Council resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security.

The Committee is deeply concerned about the plight of the more than one million Palestinian women and girls who have been forcibly displaced multiple times. As of 12 February 2024, UN Women reports that at least 28,340 Palestinians were killed in Gaza and 70 per cent of those killed are said to be women and children. 67,984 Palestinians have been injured. The Convention’s very principles are challenged when mothers are put in a situation of burying at least 7,729 children. As stated by UNFPA, an estimated 5,500 women are due to give birth within the next month, more than 180 delivering every day and an estimated 840 women may experience pregnancy- or birth-related complications. The Committee condemns the inexorable march of death, disease, and destruction in the Gaza strip.

The Committee calls on Israel to comply with the order of provisional measures of the International Court of Justice (reference to be added) to “take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of all acts” of violence, “prevent and punish the direct and public incitement to commit genocide”, and “to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance”.

The Committee calls upon Israel to allow the provision of medical personnel, medicines, water, food, fuel, shelter, and clothes to all civilians and provide a special focus on women’s and girls’ special needs such as sexual and reproductive health services and sanitary and hygiene products. The clock is ticking fast towards famine and an outbreak of epidemics. The lives and health, physical and mental, of the women and girls of Gaza are severely compromised.

The Committee deplores that women are among the first victims of conflict-related violence and stresses that they are leading forces for peace. It reaffirms its profound commitment to women’s leadership and decision-making at this moment of conflict and in all evolving processes in peace building. The Committee strongly calls for reforms in the security architecture of all parties to guarantee parity with a starting minimum quota of 30 percent for women’s representation at decision-making levels around the negotiation table and in the entire peace building continuum. Women must stop paying for the cost of war.

The Committee recognizes that the continuing war and siege cause grievous harm to all women and girls, including pregnant women and women with disabilities. This constitutes a major humanitarian, human rights and a public health crisis and a stain on our collective conscience.

The Committee calls for the immediate and unconditional release of the Israeli hostages held captive by Hamas. It also calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Palestinians, including women and girls, who are arbitrarily arrested and detained by Israeli forces.

The Committee warns against any pending and potential military offenses and incursions into the already limited land space of Rafah where hundreds of thousands of forcibly displaced persons, predominantly women and children, are seeking refuge.

The Committee appeals to the Security Council to claim an immediate and total cessation of the war in Gaza to ensure lasting peace and security in the region.