

FORUM: SECURITY COUNCIL

QUESTION OF: EVALUATING THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S RESPONSIBILITY TO INTERVENE IN SUDAN AMID REPORTS OF CIVIL WAR, ETHNIC CLEANSING, AND RESTRICTED HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

PRESIDENT: KIRA THEDE

VICE PRESIDENT: KALINA PETROVA

PRESIDENT EMAIL: KIRA.THEDE@GYRA.HAMBURG.DE

VICE PRESIDENT EMAIL: KALINAVLAPETROVA@GMAIL.COM

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I. Description of the Issue

The ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip is one of the most severe emergencies in recent international history. Following the events of 7 October 2023, when Hamas and other armed groups launched a major attack on Israel, the situation rapidly escalated into a prolonged armed conflict. Israel deployed extensive military operations aimed at neutralizing

Hamas's operational capabilities and securing the release of hostages. As the conflict intensified, the civilian population of Gaza experienced widespread devastation, including the destruction of residential areas, healthcare systems, schools, and critical infrastructure.

Over two million Palestinians remain trapped inside Gaza with extremely limited options for safe evacuation. More than 90% of the population has been displaced at least once, often multiple times, due to shifting evacuation orders and active combat zones. Those displaced are now living in overcrowded shelters, makeshift tents, or damaged buildings, facing insufficient sanitation and increased exposure to disease. Reports from humanitarian organizations indicate that almost all of Gaza's population is dependent on relief aid for daily survival.

A major concern raised by international actors is the severe restriction placed on the delivery and distribution of aid. Land border crossings, which is the primary route for aid delivery have faced closures, limited operational capacity, or delays due to strict inspection systems. Shortages of food, fuel, electricity, medicine, and clean water have escalated malnutrition, ceased essential medical services, and threatened widespread starvation risk. Humanitarian transport units have also struggled to operate safely amid continuing hostilities, road destruction, and breakdowns in communication systems.

Israel maintains that its restrictions are necessary to prevent weapons and materials with military applications from reaching Hamas. It also argues that it facilitates large quantities of humanitarian assistance and that failures in distribution are caused by internal disruption within Gaza. However, many UN experts and humanitarian organizations argue that the level of access remains far below what is required to sustain basic civilian survival and may constitute violations of international humanitarian law. The International Court of Justice has issued provisional measures ordering Israel to ensure the unhindered provision of basic services and humanitarian aid.

The humanitarian emergency in Gaza continues to raise serious questions concerning international law, accountability, civilian protection, and the international system's responsibility to protect populations in conflict. The situation demands urgent and coordinated action to ensure the delivery of life-saving assistance while upholding legal and ethical obligations. How the global community responds will set an important precedent for

the protection of civilians, humanitarian access, and respect for international norms in future conflicts.

II. Definition of Key Terms

International Humanitarian Law (IHL): The legal framework governing the conduct of armed conflict with the aim of protecting non-combatants and limiting harm.

Humanitarian Access: The ability of impartial humanitarian actors to reach civilians in need with aid and services without unwarranted interference.

Proportionality: A principle of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) requiring that civilian harm resulting from an attack must not exceed the direct military advantage anticipated.

Collective Punishment: Any punitive action targeting an entire civilian population for the actions of certain individuals, prohibited under international law.

Dual-Use Goods: Supplies that may serve civilian purposes but also have potential military applications, often subject to restriction.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): Civilians forced from their homes by conflict but still remaining within their territory.

Siege: Military encirclement and restriction of movement or supplies, which becomes unlawful if it unlawfully starves civilians.

Hostage - Taking: Detaining civilians or combatants to gain political advantage is prohibited under the Geneva Conventions.

War Crimes: Serious violations of the laws and customs of war, this can include unlawful targeting, collective punishment, or blocking humanitarian aid.

Starvation as a Method of Warfare: The deliberate denial of food, water, and essential resources to civilians, which is a serious violation of international humanitarian law and considered a war crime.

Humanitarian Corridors: Agreed routes or temporary safe areas that allow aid deliveries and evacuation of civilians during active conflict.

Ceasefire / Humanitarian Pause: A temporary halt in hostilities to enable humanitarian operations such as aid delivery, evacuation, or medical response.

III. Background Information

The Gaza Strip has faced restrictions on movement of goods and people for over a decade due to Israeli and Egyptian security policies. Prior to the current conflict, the territory already relied heavily on humanitarian aid due to limited economic opportunity and infrastructure degradation. The situation deteriorated rapidly after October 2023, with major border closures and severe damage to civilian systems. As the conflict expanded across the entirety of Gaza, humanitarian agencies struggled to maintain operations. Hospitals became overcrowded or shut down due to damage, lack of electricity, and shortages of trained personnel. The education system came to a stop, and unemployment reached near-total levels. Continued rocket fire into Israel and armed activity within densely populated civilian zones further complicated the delivery of humanitarian support.

IV. Major Countries and Organisations Involved

Israel: Controls major border crossings and security inspections affecting aid entry. Israel states restrictions are needed to prevent weapons reaching Hamas, while maintaining it enables humanitarian deliveries.

Egypt: Manages the Rafah crossing, which is vital for aid movement and medical evacuation. Its cooperation depends on security considerations and regional diplomacy.

United States: Key ally of Israel and major humanitarian donor. It supports increased aid access and stresses civilian protection and compliance with international law.

European Union: A major contributor to relief efforts that promotes unhindered humanitarian access and compliance with IHL, while engaging in diplomacy to support civilian needs.

Palestinian Authority (PA): Calls for expanded humanitarian relief and a ceasefire but has limited operational authority in Gaza. Works through diplomatic channels to support aid access.

Hamas: The recognized governing authority inside Gaza and a party to the conflict. Its military presence in civilian areas complicates civilian protection and aid delivery.

United Nations and Humanitarian Organization: UN agencies and the ICRC deliver essential services in Gaza and report major barriers to safe and consistent access due to ongoing hostilities and border restrictions.

V. Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

The United Nations General Assembly has passed multiple resolutions calling for immediate humanitarian ceasefires. The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2728 (2024), demanding improved humanitarian access and the release of hostages. The ICJ imposed provisional measures requiring Israel to ensure the delivery of essential services. Several temporary pauses in fighting have occurred but often failed to produce lasting relief, as aid remained far below required levels. Efforts to establish maritime and air aid routes have provided limited assistance since land access remains the only effective method of delivering large-scale supplies. Negotiations hosted by Egypt, Qatar, and international partners have periodically enabled prisoner exchanges and increased aid, but not at sustained or sufficient levels.

VI. Possible Solutions

Improving humanitarian access in Gaza requires urgent operational measures alongside longer term commitments. One option is to demand guaranteed daily minimum deliveries of aid and fuel, coordinated through a UN-administered monitoring mechanism to ensure consistent support for civilians. Enhancing deconfliction systems would increase the safety of humanitarian workers and facilities. Reopening and securing key border crossings, particularly Rafah, under joint international arrangements could expand and stabilize access. Greater international oversight may also help address concerns about diversion while ensuring vital supplies reach civilians.

Additionally, longer term efforts must prioritize reconstruction, the restoration of essential services, and mental health support to strengthen resilience and reduce dependence on emergency relief. Any humanitarian approach must be closely linked to diplomatic negotiations toward a ceasefire and the release of hostages, creating conditions for a more sustainable and protected environment for civilians.

VII. Questions Delegates Should Consider During Research

To what extent should humanitarian access take precedence over security concerns during armed conflict? How can the Security Council ensure compliance with its resolutions and with international humanitarian law? What mechanisms can prevent aid diversion without restricting lifesaving supplies? Should parties responsible for impediments to aid face accountability measures such as sanctions or legal inquiry? How can the international community lay the groundwork for post-conflict reconstruction and civilian recovery?

VIII. Relevant UN Treaties and Events

Fourth Geneva Convention (1949) - Protection of civilians in armed conflict.

UNSC Resolution 2728 (2024) - Immediate humanitarian ceasefire and unimpeded aid access.

ICJ Provisional Measures in South Africa v. Israel (2024) - Obligation to enable aid and prevent acts prohibited under the Genocide Convention.

Multiple UNGA resolutions calling for urgent humanitarian intervention and protection of civilians in Gaza.

IX. Useful Links

UNRWA Official Gaza Emergency Page -> <https://www.ochaopt.org/updates>

WHO Emergency Response in the Occupied Palestinian Territory ->
<https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/WHO-response-in-oPt-April-December-2024.pdf>

International Committee of the Red Cross Gaza Updates ->
<https://www.icrc.org/en/where-we-work/israel-and-occupied-territories>

UN Security Council Documentation Centre Palestine ->
<https://www.un.org/unispal/data-collection/security-council/>

X. Sources

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Reports ->
<https://www.unocha.org/ocha-annual-report>

UNRWA Public Situation Briefings ->
<https://www.unrwa.org/situation-report-gaza-and-west-bank>

World Food Programme Emergency Bulletins -> <https://www.wfp.org/publications>

WHO Gaza Health System Status Updates ->

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/situations/conflict-in-Israel-and-oPt>