

**PRESS  
RELEASE**

UN4GAZA/PR/2025/004  
New York  
29 August 2025



**UN STAFF FOR GAZA APPLAUDS OHCHR STAFF COMMITTEE**

\* \* \* \* \*

UN Staff for Gaza **applauds the Staff Committee** of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), along with **the more than 517 members of OHCHR personnel**, for their exercise of **courage and conscience**.

On 25 August, the Staff Committee sent a letter to Mr. Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. They expressed “profound frustration at the scale, scope, and nature of reported violations” of human rights in the Gaza Strip and note that, in their assessment, based on available evidence and authoritative assessments by UN-appointed experts, “the legal threshold under the Genocide Convention has been met.”

They request that OHCHR’s response “be commensurate with the gravity of the situation,” including by calling for the suspension of the sale and transfers of arms and related logistical and financial support to Israeli authorities, and by means of a due-diligence review of OHCHR engagements, including business relationships, “that could materially support or contribute to serious violations of international human rights or humanitarian law.”

The Staff Committee invited members of OHCHR personnel to endorse the letter by close of business (Geneva time) on 27 August. On 28 August, the Committee announced that more than 517 members of OHCHR personnel had given their endorsements.

[The full text of the letter is available here.](#)

**UN Staff for Gaza notes that the OHCHR Staff Committee and endorsers have exercised remarkable courage and conscience, in line with foundational values of the United Nations.**

“The levels of death and destruction in Gaza are without parallel in recent times,” Secretary-General António Guterres said on 28 August. “And the systems that sustain life – food, water, healthcare – have been systematically dismantled.”

UNRESTRICTED  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On 28 August, Mr. Türk replied to the Staff Committee's letter. "I know we all share a feeling of moral indignation at the horrors we are witnessing," he wrote. He further said: "I also call upon you to remain united as an Office in the face of such adversity: united in values, in solidarity and in our determination to use our crucial mandate to make a difference for human rights"

UN Staff for Gaza acknowledges the High Commissioner's prompt response to the OHCHR Staff Committee. [The full text of his reply is available here.](#)

UN Staff for Gaza calls on the whole of the international civil service worldwide, including all Staff Unions, Staff Councils, and Staff Committees across the United Nations System, to **take example** from the OHCHR Staff Committee and exercise similar courage and conscience.

**"Respect is due both to the Staff Committee and to the High Commissioner for their constructive exchange,"** said Mr. Andrew Gilmour, Chair of UN Staff for Gaza and former United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights in the OHCHR.

"It is **deeply regrettable** that the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) 20 months ago, which indicated the serious risk of genocide in Gaza, have not been implemented even though they are binding," he said.

"While we all hope the ICJ will decide the genocide case swiftly, it would be a **terrible dereliction of responsibility** if Governments were to await that decision," he added. "The Genocide Convention, which so many States have ratified, including Israel, explicitly spells out the duty to **prevent genocide**, not just punish perpetrators after the fact. So if Governments were to wait for protracted legal processes to be completed before taking action, that would enable the perpetrators to keep on going with their grisly work."

Mr. Gilmour is available for media enquiries. Please contact [un4gaza@gmail.com](mailto:un4gaza@gmail.com).

\* \* \* \* \*

END.

Contact UN Staff for Gaza at [un4gaza@gmail.com](mailto:un4gaza@gmail.com). Follow us on [X](#) and [Instagram](#).

*UN Staff for Gaza is a private association, neither formally affiliated with nor endorsed by the United Nations. Persons involved with the initiative act in their private, unofficial capacities, **maintaining at all times the integrity, independence and impartiality required of international civil servants.***