



### Widespread Famine in Gaza and the Total Absence of the International Community

The deepening hunger crisis in Gaza has reached calamitous new levels over the preceding weeks, with health officials expressing that malnutrition is now killing civilians at an alarmingly higher rate than at any point since the onset of the 21-month-long Gaza War. Despite verbal denunciation of the dire shortages of humanitarian relief and the reprehensible repeated Israeli mass killings of civilians seeking aid, no action has been taken to significantly increase the flow of much-needed supplies. Earlier this week, more than two dozen countries condemned Israel's continued inhumane killing of civilians and its denial of essential humanitarian assistance, yet there has been a complete lack of concrete actions and measures taken to put an end to these egregious human rights violations and war crimes. Furthermore, Israel's use of starvation as a weapon of war and the militarization of aid has meant that even attempts at collecting humanitarian supplies has become a deadly task for Gazans. United Nations agencies estimate that at least 1,000 civilians have been killed by Israeli forces while trying to access food in recent months – with nearly all of these taking place at distribution sites operated by the universally criticized Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF). Prior to Israel's politicized aid distribution takeover in May, international relief organizations independently operated several hundred sites across Gaza where civilians could access food, but since then, increasingly desperate civilians have been deliberately targeted and killed in deplorable numbers at GHF hubs.

In light of what has unfolded in recent weeks, the United Nations has warned about the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Gaza. UN officials have highlighted the growing number of civilians arriving at hospitals and health facilities suffering from severe malnutrition. In fact, medical personnel on the ground in Gaza have recently recounted the troubling levels of this that they have witnessed, particularly among children, noting that it has significantly worsened during the past few weeks. Surgeons have also lamented that this has reached a point where many patients are dying because malnutrition is preventing their wounds from properly healing. The scale of food insecurity has directly impacted aid and medical workers too, with humanitarian agencies and hospitals conveying that their own staff are suffering from increased levels of malnutrition. Media outlets such as Reuters and AFP have even stated that their journalists are at risk of starvation. This week, the UN World Food Program declared that Gaza's hunger crisis has reached what they labeled as "new and astonishing levels of desperation," outlining that a third of the civilian population is going days without food due to the current conditions. Despite all of this, humanitarian officials continue to decry the lack of tangible global efforts to address the blatant Israeli disregard for international law that has resulted in these harrowing circumstances across Gaza.

On top of impeding humanitarian relief efforts, Israeli forces are actively attacking facilities tied to them as well. Earlier this week, Israeli strikes were carried out on World Health Organization (WHO) buildings in central Gaza, including its main warehouse and a staff residence. Regrettably, it is precisely because of the international community's inaction and failure to implement meaningful punitive measures that Israeli forces continue to feel emboldened to commit these types of appalling violations. In spite of the Israeli attacks, the WHO did remark that not only would it remain in central Gaza, but the organization planned to expand its critical operations and medical services. All told, the strikes on the WHO facilities did not come as a surprise to those that have been closely following the behavior of Israeli forces during the course of the Gaza War, as all forms of infrastructure – civilian,

humanitarian, medical, and otherwise – have been indiscriminately targeted by destructive bombardment and attacks.

While sentiment and public opinion around the world has grown increasingly critical of Israel's conduct in Gaza, there is a need for concrete and robust global actions to reflect this in order to put an end to these violations and help alleviate the ever-deteriorating humanitarian crisis. Condemnations and joint statements from various governments denouncing these continuous abuses have clearly not deterred them from repeatedly taking place. Words are not enough, and should be coupled with impactful measures such as arms embargoes, sanctions, and the suspension of ties and agreements. With the recent worsening of humanitarian conditions in Gaza, the urgency for this has only heightened. As Israel's biggest supporter, the United States bears a great degree of culpability in what has taken place. Additionally, a host of Arab countries deserve blame as well for doing nothing to pressure the U.S. and Israel, especially Egypt – due to its proximity to Gaza – and those that have signed on to the Abraham Accords yet fail to hold Israel accountable for its pattern of heinous war crimes, human rights abuses, and violations of international law.