



Statement on behalf of OIC Group, delivered by Amb. Bilal Ahmad, Permanent Representative, during Briefing by High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Situation in Occupied Palestinian Territory

16 November 2023

High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Volker Turk,

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the group of OIC member states, I thank you for the briefing and for your assessment of the grave human rights and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), especially Gaza, and Israel.

Your initiative to undertake a visit to the Rafah crossing between Egypt and the besieged Gaza Strip of the OPT was necessary and timely.

At the same time, we express disappointment that you were not provided access to Gaza, the West Bank, or Al Quds Al Sharif, all of which have seen a sharp uptick in human rights and humanitarian law violations, including settler violence, against Palestinian civilians.

We echo your concerns and those of the UN Special Procedures and Mandate Holders who have, over the past month, repeatedly warned the world of the human rights violations and the crimes being committed in Gaza and the West Bank.

The international human rights and humanitarian legal systems have, to quote the High Commissioner, “fallen off a precipice”. The unapologetic killing of more than a hundred UNRWA staff – and disinformation campaigns to mis-portray them as extremist sympathizers – reflects the brazen impunity.

We affirm our abiding solidarity with, and unwavering support for the Palestinian people, and our joint commitment to our responsibilities for supporting our central cause, the Cause of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

The Resolution of the Joint Arab-Islamic Extraordinary Summit on Israeli Aggression Against the Palestinian People has called for cessation of the ongoing Israeli aggression, for opening humanitarian support and a mechanism of international protection for the Palestinian people including protection of all human rights including the right to development, security, inalienable right to self-determination and above all their right to life.

The Joint Arab-Islamic Summit meeting has also called for supporting the work of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry established by the Human Rights Council.

I thank you!