



Human Rights Watch Submission to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

“The situation of persons with disabilities affected by armed conflict in Gaza and the West Bank”
July 10th, 2025

Human Rights Watch welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the “Committee”) in advance of its upcoming public session on the situation of persons with disabilities affected by armed conflict in Gaza and the West Bank.

This submission draws from our reports published on the situation of people with disabilities in Gaza in November 2023, and on the situation of children with disabilities in Gaza in September 2024, alongside newer releases.¹

Summary

Human Rights Watch’s research has documented that people with disabilities in Gaza face heightened risks of death and injury resulting from Israeli government’s military attacks

¹ “Gaza: Israeli Attacks, Blockade Devastating for People with Disabilities,” Human Rights Watch press release, November 1, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/01/gaza-israeli-attacks-blockade-devastating-people-disabilities>; Human Rights Watch, *“They Destroyed What Was Inside Us” Children with Disabilities Amid Attacks on Gaza*, September 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/09/30/they-destroyed-what-was-inside-us/children-disabilities-amid-israels-attacks-gaza>; Emina Ćerimović (Human Rights Watch), “Why Germany Should Pause Its Arms Sales to Israel?” commentary, Euobserver, November 4, 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/11/04/why-germany-should-pause-its-arms-sales-israel>; Emina Ćerimović (Human Rights Watch), “Gaza’s Seniors Desperately Need Medical Care, Including Evacuations” commentary, Foreign Policy in Focus, January 30, 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/01/30/gazas-seniors-desperately-need-medical-care-including-evacuations>; Emina Ćerimović, “Israeli Authorities Block Health Care Workers from Entering Gaza,” commentary, Human Rights Dispatch, February 27, 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/02/27/israeli-authorities-block-health-care-workers-entering-gaza>.

and unlawful blockade since October 7, 2023.² Both children and adults with disabilities face compounded barriers to accessing safety, medical care, assistive devices, food, water, and other essentials. They are also at increased risk of death or injury during attacks due to the additional difficulties they face in evacuating and fleeing to safety.

These risks have been exacerbated by:

- a) inadequate evacuation procedures and forced displacement;
- b) failure to provide effective advance warnings in accordance with international humanitarian law;
- c) the ongoing blockade and the use of starvation as a method of war;
- d) extermination and genocidal acts; and
- e) repeated attacks against hospitals and medical infrastructure.³

Human Rights Watch has also found that Israeli military actions have inflicted profound trauma on Palestinian children with disabilities, who face additional rights violations, including denial of education, lack of access to much needed medical care, assistive devices, and psychological harm.⁴ Moreover, Israeli military strikes and ground attacks have also caused serious injuries that have led to permanent disabilities and lifelong scarring for Palestinian children.

The Israeli government should take immediate action to end the wrongful deaths, injuries, and suffering of Palestinians, particularly those with disabilities. Israeli government allies, should specifically condemn Israeli abuses that cause particular harm to Palestinian children, including the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, the siege of Gaza and restrictions on

² Human Rights Watch, *They Destroyed What Was Inside Us*, p. 89; “Gaza: Israeli Attacks, Blockade Devastating for People with Disabilities,” Human Rights Watch press release, November 1, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/01/gaza-israeli-attacks-blockade-devastating-people-disabilities>.

³ “Gaza: Israeli Attacks, Blockade Devastating for People with Disabilities,” Human Rights Watch press release, November 1, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/01/gaza-israeli-attacks-blockade-devastating-people-disabilities>; Human Rights Watch, *“They Destroyed What Was Inside Us” Children with Disabilities Amid Attacks on Gaza*, September 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/09/30/they-destroyed-what-was-inside-us/children-disabilities-amid-israels-attacks-gaza>; Human Rights Watch, *“Extermination and Acts of Genocide” Israel Deliberately Depriving Palestinians in Gaza of Water*, December 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/12/19/extermination-and-acts-genocide/israel-deliberately-depriving-palestinians-gaza>; Human Rights Watch, *“Hopeless, Starving, and Besieged” Israel’s Forced Displacement of Palestinians in Gaza*, November 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/11/14/hopeless-starving-and-besieged/israels-forced-displacement-palestinians-gaza#:~:text=This%20report%2C%20based%20on%20interviews%20with%2039%20Palestinians,Israel%E2%80%99s%20claims%20of%20lawful%20displacement%20are%20largely%20false.>

⁴ Emina Ćerimović, “At risk and overlooked: Children with disabilities and armed conflict,” *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 922, November 2022, <https://international-review.icrc.org/articles/at-risk-and-overlooked-children-with-disabilities-and-armed-conflict-922>; and “Gaza: Israeli Restrictions Harm People with Disabilities,” Human Rights Watch press release, December 3, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/03/gaza-israeli-restrictions-harm-people-disabilities>.

humanitarian aid, and unlawful attacks on hospitals and medical transport. These governments should adopt targeted sanctions and other measures to press the Israeli government to comply with its international obligations. The United States, Germany, and other countries continuing to provide arms and military assistance to Israel risk complicity in war crimes and grave human rights violations.

Inability to flee attacks, inadequate evacuation orders and warnings

People with disabilities described the immense difficulties they had in following evacuation orders and fleeing attacks. Heavy destruction made it extremely difficult to use wheelchairs and other assistive devices. The lack of electricity stopped elevators from functioning, making it extra difficult for people with certain physical disabilities who live in high-rise buildings to leave their homes.⁵ Moreover, the lack of effective advance warning of attacks affecting civilians put the lives of people with disabilities at higher risk.

Following an attack that hit her home in Beit Hanoun, northern Gaza, Ghazal, a 14-year-old girl with cerebral palsy, lost all her assistive devices – her wheelchair, a walker, and a medical boot.⁶ Two days later, on October 13, 2023, Israeli army ordered everyone in the north to evacuate to the south. Without her assistive devices and no transportation available, Ghazal had to be supported and carried by her family. As they grew tired and Ghazal realized that she was slowing her family down, she told her parents to leave her behind. “I felt at that moment that death was near. I gave up and sat on the ground in the middle of the road, crying. I told them to go on without me,”⁷ Ghazal said. Her mother said she was contemplating leaving Ghazal behind, “I was confused: whether to stop while we were under bombardment or to leave Ghazal behind and walk.”⁸

While Ghazal was able to flee to the south under precarious conditions, other people with disabilities were not. Bader Mosleh, a 39-year-old man with a visual disability, was killed in an apparent Israeli strike in Gaza on December 7.⁹ He was also a father of 3 children, ages 2, 8, and 10. He was unable to flee his home, despite the bombardment and the displacement orders, and there was no safe and accessible place for him to go to.¹⁰

⁵ Gaza: Israeli Attacks, Blockade Devastating for People with Disabilities,” Human Rights Watch press release, November 1, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/01/gaza-israeli-attacks-blockade-devastating-people-disabilities>.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁷ Human Rights Watch, Gaza: Israeli Attacks Devastate Lives of Children with Disabilities, video, 30 September 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/video-photos/video/2024/09/30/gaza-israeli-attacks-devastate-lives-children-disabilities>.

⁸ Human Rights Watch, *They Destroyed What Was Inside Us*, p. 53.

⁹ Front Line Defenders, “Profile – Bader Mosleh” <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/profile/bader-mosleh> (accessed July 4, 2025).

¹⁰ “Gaza: Israeli Attacks, Blockade Devastating for People with Disabilities,” Human Rights Watch press release, November 1, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/01/gaza-israeli-attacks-blockade-devastating-people-disabilities>.

People with disabilities in Gaza struggled to flee attacks also because of a lack of access to assistive devices. Israeli authorities have imposed severe restrictions on items that the Israeli military unilaterally deems “dual-use.”¹¹ These are civilian items that include wheelchairs, crutches, and other assistive devices. In addition to impeding their ability to flee attacks, lack of access to these devices also made it more difficult for children with disabilities to access sanitation and meet basic needs, worsening their mental health.¹² In some cases, Human Rights Watch documented that even when people with disabilities have assistive devices, fleeing attacks remained difficult, due to environmental barriers – such as mounds of sand at checkpoints, widespread potholes and extensive destruction – all of which make it nearly impossible to use a wheelchair.¹³

Lack of advance warning of the attacks

People with disabilities and their families consistently reported that the Israeli military does not provide advance warning of the attacks, making it harder for them to evacuate and save their assistive devices.¹⁴ Even if such warnings were provided, for them to be compatible with the rights of people with disabilities, such warnings should be provided in accessible formats and give sufficient notice so that people with disabilities can indeed evacuate.¹⁵

Jamal Al Rozzi, the father of a 27-year-old man with cerebral palsy, told Human Rights Watch in October 2023 that Israeli military gave no advance warning of the attack when his neighborhood in Rimal, Gaza city, was heavily bombarded.¹⁶ While his son can usually walk with the help of a crutch, when the bombardment started, he froze, and he started to scream. He couldn’t stand on his feet, and his dad had to put him down on the floor and drag him to another corner of the apartment which might be safer.

¹¹ Human Rights Watch, *They Destroyed What Was Inside Us*, p. 35.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 55-56.

¹⁴ Human Rights Watch, *They Destroyed What Was Inside Us*, p. 85; “Gaza: Israeli Attacks, Blockade Devastating for People with Disabilities,” Human Rights Watch press release, November 1, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/01/gaza-israeli-attacks-blockade-devastating-people-disabilities>.

¹⁵ Human Rights Watch, *They Destroyed What Was Inside Us*, p. 77; “Gaza: Israeli Attacks, Blockade Devastating for People with Disabilities,” Human Rights Watch press release, November 1, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/01/gaza-israeli-attacks-blockade-devastating-people-disabilities>.

¹⁶ “Gaza: Israeli Attacks, Blockade Devastating for People with Disabilities,” Human Rights Watch press release, November 1, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/01/gaza-israeli-attacks-blockade-devastating-people-disabilities>.

Forced displacement

Human Rights Watch reported in November 2024 that Israeli authorities were committing the war crimes and crimes against humanity of forced displacement, which created distinct harms for children and adults with disabilities, who are in general at higher risks of violations during forced displacement.¹⁷ As of May 2025, virtually all Palestinians in Gaza have been displaced and Israeli authorities have imposed forced displacement as a state policy.¹⁸

While all Palestinians are impacted, for people with disabilities, being forced to leave one's home is particularly harrowing due to lack of accessibility, accommodation, and access to basic services while in displacement. Human Rights Watch documented several cases of people with disabilities who were either unable to flee their homes or decided not to, fearing how they will survive while displaced.¹⁹

Impact of Starvation on People with Disabilities

In Gaza, where Israeli authorities imposed an unlawful blockade and severe restrictions on humanitarian aid, amounting to the war crimes of starvation as a weapon of war and collective punishment,²⁰ children with disabilities experienced unique harms. While there is no official data on the number of children with disabilities among the children who have died or are acutely malnourished in Gaza, existing research demonstrates that children with disabilities are in general at a higher risk of malnutrition.²¹ Our research showed that children who are on a specific diet were at a particularly high risk of nutritional deficiencies and starvation because the food items they needed were denied entry to Gaza, and children who used medical devices needed for

¹⁷ Human Rights Watch, *"Hopeless, Starving, and Besieged": Israel's Forced Displacement of Palestinians in Gaza*, November 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/11/14/hopeless-starving-and-besieged/israels-forced-displacement-palestinians-gaza>.

¹⁸ "Gaza: Latest Israeli Plan Inches Closer to Extermination," Human Rights Watch news release, May 15, 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/05/15/gaza-latest-israeli-plan-inches-closer-extinction>.

¹⁹ "Gaza: Israeli Attacks Devastate Lives of Children with Disabilities," Human Rights Watch news release, September 30, 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/09/30/gaza-israeli-attacks-devastate-lives-children-disabilities>.

²⁰ "Israel: Starvation Used as Weapon of War in Gaza," Human Rights Watch news release, December 18, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/18/israel-starvation-used-weapon-war-gaza>.

²¹ Maeve Hume-Nixon, Hannah Kuper, "The association between malnutrition and childhood disability in low- and middle-income countries: systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies," <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tmi.13139#:~:text=Malnutrition%20may%20also%20lead%20to,public%20health%20systems%20are%20weakest>; Pelizzo G, Calcaterra V, Acierno C and Cena H (2019) Malnutrition and Associated Risk Factors Among Disabled Children. Special Considerations in the Pediatric Surgical "Fragile" Patients. *Front. Pediatr.* 7:86. Doi: 10.3389/fped.2019.00086, <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fped.2019.00086/full#B4>; Magdalena Engl, Paul Binnis, Indi Trehab, Natasha Lelijveld, Chloe Angood, Marie McGrath, Nora Groce, Marko Kerac, "Children Living with Disabilities are Absent From Severe Malnutrition Guidelines," <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.09.24.21264078v1.full.pdf>.

feeding, such as a gastrostomy feeding tube, could not easily prepare their food because of the lack of access to electricity.²²

Dr. Ahmed Shahin said his son Osman, who uses a gastrostomy feeding tube, lost seven kilograms between the beginning of the hostilities and November 16 (when they were able to leave Gaza), because the family lacked access to both the specific foods he needed, such as vegetables, and electricity to blend his food.²³

Similarly, Human Rights Watch documented issues in finding food which can be blended and is compatible with the dietary restrictions, such as lactose and gluten intolerance, or access to fresh food and proteins.²⁴

Crime of extermination and acts of genocide

In December 2024, Human Rights Watch documented that Israeli authorities deliberately deprived Palestinians in Gaza of adequate access to water, most likely resulting in thousands of deaths from malnutrition, dehydration and diseases, amounting to the crime against humanity of extermination and acts of genocide.²⁵ These acts had devastating impacts on children and adults with disabilities – some of who have increased needs for clean water and face additional challenges in accessing it on their own. As an example, Bader Mosleh, the disability rights defender mentioned above, told Human Rights Watch in October 2023 that he walked three kilometers each day to fill one plastic container of water, which holds several liters, for his family and five other families he was hosting. Because of his visual disability, he had to ask his 10-year-old daughter to accompany and assist him.²⁶

²² Human Rights Watch, *They Destroyed What Was Inside Us*, p. 61.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

²⁵ Human Rights Watch, “Extermination and Acts of Genocide,” *Israel Deliberately Depriving Palestinians in Gaza of Water*, December 19, 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/12/19/extermination-and-acts-genocide/israel-deliberately-depriving-palestinians-gaza>.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Impact of the Israeli's government blockade and the attacks on hospitals on the right to health

Damage and destruction of Gaza's healthcare facilities, coupled with the harm to medical professionals and health workers, has undermined Palestinians' right to health.²⁷

In March 2025, Human Rights Watch found that Israeli forces occupying hospitals in Gaza between 2023 and 2024 severely interfered with the treatment of wounded and sick patients, causing deaths and unnecessary suffering of Palestinian patients, amounting to war crimes.²⁸ Medical workers told Human Rights Watch that Israeli forces denied doctors' pleas to bring medicine and supplies to patients and blocked access to hospitals and ambulances, leading to the deaths of wounded and people who had chronic medical conditions.²⁹

The blockade has also created serious shortages of medical equipment, supplies, and medication. The constant military bombardment of Gaza has also made it more difficult for people to access their medication and medical equipment.

Children are the most affected and children with disabilities who are in need of ongoing access to medical care have been disproportionately impacted.³⁰ Several family members of children with disabilities who also have chronic health conditions, such as cystic fibrosis, which is a life-threatening condition, described not having access to specific medication for their child needs.³¹ Examples of medication lacking are anti-convulsant and anti-epileptic drugs, as well as medications for hypertension and diabetes, including for older persons.

The uncle and caregiver of Mohammad, a 5-year-old boy with cerebral palsy and developmental disabilities, said his nephew does not have access to anti-convulsant and anti-epileptic medication that he used to take twice a day prior to October 7, 2023. "It's either unavailable or

²⁷ "Gaza: Unlawful Israeli Hospital Strikes Worsen Health Crisis," Human Rights Watch news release, November 14, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/14/gaza-unlawful-israeli-hospital-strikes-worsen-health-crisis>; "Israel: Palestinian Healthcare Workers Tortured," Human Rights Watch press release, August 26, 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/08/26/israel-palestinian-healthcare-workers-tortured>.

²⁸ "Gaza: Israeli Military War Crimes While Occupying Hospitals," Human Rights Watch press release, March 20, 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/03/20/gaza-israeli-military-war-crimes-while-occupying-hospitals>.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Human Rights Watch, *They Destroyed What Was Inside Us*, p. 42.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

prohibitively expensive,” his uncle told us.³² Mohammad’s father was a nurse who knew how to attend to his needs, however, he was killed in an apparent Israeli attack, according to the uncle.

All doctors Human Rights Watch interviewed for the 2024 report on children with disabilities in Gaza confirmed that the medical needs of children with preexisting disabilities go unmet due to acute needs and lack of access to supplies, and that children with disabilities will die as a result or acquire further disabilities.³³

In February 2025, Human Rights Watch documented that Israeli government has also denied medical professionals entry into Gaza, exacerbating Palestinians’ right to health, which is especially harming children with disabilities – both those who had a disability prior to October 2023, and those who have acquired a disability then.³⁴ One orthopaedic surgeon who was denied entry was supposed to provide crucial treatment to children with disabilities. One of her patients, Minah, a 3-year-old girl with a clubfoot condition, had been left without necessary treatment for months. As a result, Minah’s feet started to turn in again. The orthopaedic surgeon had planned surgery to reverse this. Thousands of children have also acquired disabilities due to Israel’s use of explosive weapons and have been unable to obtain reconstructive surgeries.³⁵ Newborns have had almost no access to follow-up health care for more than 18 months, increasing risks of health complications.³⁶

Israel is also controlling who can evacuate from Gaza to get medical treatment for injuries sustained by the hostilities or for a chronic condition. According to OCHA, reporting Gaza Ministry of Health data, over 125,000 people have been injured in the conflict (this figure does not include people in Gaza with a disability and chronic health condition who require ongoing medical care).³⁷

Of the thousands who have applied to get a permit from Israel to evacuate for treatment, only a handful have been able to.³⁸ As an example, since March 18, 2025 only 338 patients have been medically evacuated abroad, out of the more than 10,000 patients who remain in urgent need of

³² *Ibid.*, p. 48.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

³⁴ Emina Ćerimović, “Israeli Authorities Block Health Care Workers from Entering Gaza,” commentary, Human Rights Dispatch, February 27, 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/02/27/israeli-authorities-block-health-care-workers-entering-gaza>.

³⁵ Human Rights Watch, *They Destroyed What Was Inside Us*, p. 43-44.

³⁶ Emina Ćerimović, “Israeli Authorities Block Health Care Workers from Entering Gaza,” commentary, Human Rights Dispatch, February 27, 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/02/27/israeli-authorities-block-health-care-workers-entering-gaza>.

³⁷ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Reported impact snapshot Gaza Strip”, June 18, 2025 <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-18-june-2025>.

³⁸ Human Rights Watch, *They Destroyed What Was Inside Us*, p. 49-50.

medical evacuation.³⁹ Several children with disabilities had medical referrals for treatment abroad but were unable to leave.⁴⁰ Of those who have left Gaza, many are being evacuated to Egypt, which has a healthcare system that is limited in its ability to treat their conditions.

Moreover, Human Rights Watch documented a case of an older woman with a disability who died due to inability to access medical treatment and evacuation. Sarah Al Deiry, a 76-year-old woman with multiple disabilities, was denied by Israeli authorities permission to travel to access medication necessary to treat her diabetes, which was unavailable in Gaza.⁴¹ Before her death, she had been displaced several times without access to adequate clothes, food, water, or sanitation.

Mental health harms

Both children and adults with disabilities experience psychological harm and lifelong trauma stemming from the violence and deprivation they have endured or witnessed, as well as because of the unique challenges they face.⁴² When we spoke with Ghazal, who loved going to school and bragged about being one of the top students, we asked her to describe the impact of hostilities on her. She said, “From the day the war broke out, they destroyed what was inside us.” They also feel like a burden to their families, that they may be a reason their family cannot survive, and the lack of assistive devices makes it harder for them to be independent, which also has enormous mental health impacts.

Children with disabilities have also been orphaned, and for them, the loss of their parents is especially difficult, as they often need additional support compared to other children.

Education

Another psychological impact of the recurring hostilities and crises is the loss of education. Nearly 90 percent of schools in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed, and hundreds of thousands of students have been out of school for the 2023-24, and 2024-25 school year.⁴³ Ghazal dreams of

³⁹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Humanitarian Situation Update #302 Gaza Strip,” July 2, 2025, <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-302-gaza-strip>.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁴¹ Emina Čerimović, (Human Rights Watch), “Gaza’s Seniors Desperately Need Medical Care, Including Evacuations” commentary, Foreign Policy in Focus, January 30, 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/01/30/gazas-seniors-desperately-need-medical-care-including-evacuations>.

⁴² Human Rights Watch, *They Destroyed What Was Inside Us*, p. 4.

⁴³ Sarah Ferguson and Tong Su, “Temporary Learning Spaces a Haven for Gaza’s children” United Nations Children’s Fund USA, November 5, 2024, <https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/temporary-learning-spaces-haven-gazas-children>; United Nations Children’s

returning to school. “I wanted to complete my education and continue my life normally,” she said. “I was one of the outstanding students in school.”⁴⁴ Without prompting, many families shared that their child or children with disabilities loved going to school and their favorite subject. Access to education is crucial because safe and protective environments like schools can provide a sense of normalcy essential to children’s development and psychological well-being.⁴⁵

Acquiring a disability because of Israel’s use of explosive weapons

In addition to the approximate 90,000 children who had a disability in Gaza prior to October 2023, thousands of others have acquired a disability due to Israel’s use of explosive weapons within densely populated areas as well as ground attacks.

One such child, Malek - a 13-year-old boy lost his arm after an explosion at the central market in Nuseirat refugee camp. He waited for hours before receiving medical assistance due to an overwhelmed healthcare system, staff shortages, and lack of medical supplies.⁴⁶

Acquiring a disability without adequate support can be extremely difficult for children. Dr. Haytham Ahmed told HRW that physical injuries, especially burns and amputations, take an enormous toll not only on a child’s physical health, but also on their psychological well-being: “We are talking about children who are dealing with extreme trauma, horrific fears, and physical harms. They will need therapy and psychosocial support for life.”⁴⁷

Recommendations

We hope the Committee include in its report the following recommendations:

To States Providing Arms/Military Assistance to Israel:

- Suspend military assistance and arms sales to Israel so long as its forces commit serious violations of international humanitarian law with impunity.
- Enforce domestic legislation limiting the transfer of arms and military assistance for violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

Fund, “45,000 first graders unable to start the new school year in the Gaza Strip: UNICEF,” September 2024, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/45000-first-graders-unable-start-new-school-year-gaza-strip-unicef>.

⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch, *They Destroyed What Was Inside Us*, p. 73.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.19

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

To member states of the CRPD:

- Publicly condemn Israeli authorities' war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide.
- Press Israeli authorities to lift its unlawful blockade on Gaza, ensure and facilitate full and unrestricted access of humanitarian aid, including fuel, special food, medicine, assistive devices, and that people with disabilities can safely receive aid.
- Impose targeted sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes, review with a view to suspend bilateral treaties, and use other forms of leverage to press Israeli government to comply with their obligations under the Genocide Convention and international humanitarian and human rights law, including the CRPD.
- Continue to support the efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.
- Press Israel to ensure child medical and mental health specialists can enter Gaza without restrictions.
- Collaborate with the Palestinian and Egyptian authorities to identify children, including those with pre-existing disabilities, who need medical treatment abroad and facilitate their evacuation for treatment.
- Facilitate access to training and education, including through support and scholarships, for medical, social, and mental health staff from Gaza.

To the Government of Israel:

Protection and Safety of Children with Disabilities

- Refrain from using explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas, the use of which raises serious concerns that attacks are likely to indiscriminately harm civilians, including children, and civilian objects in violation of international humanitarian law.
- Take all necessary measures for the protection and safety of children with disabilities in Gaza as obligated by international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).
- Specifically consider the protection and safety of children with disabilities in military operations in accordance with international humanitarian law, including by raising awareness and sensitization at all levels of the military on the particular risks and harms to people with disabilities and their needs during military operations.

- Provide effective advance warning of attacks, unless circumstances do not permit, in accessible and inclusive manners and formats, to allow people with disabilities sufficient time to evacuate.
- Do not unlawfully displace civilians in violation of international humanitarian law. In case of evacuation orders, take into account the needs of people with disabilities, many of whom are unable to leave without assistance. Ensure that evacuation areas are capable of providing for the needs of people with disabilities.
- Facilitate the evacuations of children with disabilities and their families to voluntarily receive medical care elsewhere, while ensuring their right to return to Gaza.
- End the blockade and permit free movement of people and goods to and from Gaza, subject to the restrictions permitted under international law, recognizing the acute risks to children with disabilities caused by the longstanding closure of Gaza.
- Dismantle all forms of systematic domination and oppression against Palestinian children with disabilities, including in Gaza, and ensure they have access to rights equal to Israeli citizen children with disabilities.

International Court of Justice Orders

- Comply with provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice to protect Palestinians in Gaza from genocide.

Access to Humanitarian Aid

- Stop obstructing aid—particularly food, including those items needed by children on a special diet, water, medicine, assistive devices, and fuel—from entering Gaza by fully opening its crossings, urgently opening additional ones, and not placing unjustified restrictions that prevent humanitarian goods from entering Gaza.
- Eliminate the “dual-use” label on medical-related supplies, assistive aids, and accessible technology like eyeglasses, wheelchairs, walkers, canes, hearing aid, and other assistive devices needed by people with disabilities, the restriction of which invariably has a disproportionate negative impact on civilians compared to any military advantage.
- Restore access to water and electricity.
- Ensure the protection of aid workers, including by ending attacks on humanitarian convoys, humanitarian workers, and officials in Gaza responsible for protecting and distributing aid.

- Ensure aid can reach all parts of Gaza and that civilians can safely receive it, including by ending attacks on civilians gathered to collect aid.
- Support the provision of sustainable, timely, appropriate, inclusive, and accessible assistance to civilians with disabilities, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2475 (2019).

Access to Health Care

- Ensure the right to the highest attainable standard of health.
 - Do not conduct unlawful attacks on medical personnel, facilities, and transports as well as on the wounded and sick, or obstruct access to health care, particularly as a punitive measure.
 - Comply with all non-derogable components of the right to health, including ensuring the equitable distribution and access to health facilities, goods, and services on a non-discriminatory basis.
 - Provide access to essential medicines, particularly those defined as such by WHO's Action Programme on Essential Drugs.
- Support the provision of mental health and psychosocial support services to children, and ensure they reach and are accessible to children with disabilities.

Reparations

- Develop and implement a reparations program, on the basis of meaningful and effective consultations with victims, that includes targeted reparations for children who have acquired a disability and children with a pre-existing disability, including those with psychosocial disabilities, who have been harmed as a result of violations of international human rights or humanitarian law. Ensure they have access to free, quality, and rights-respecting medical, psychosocial, and mental health care services, including rehabilitation for the acquired disability and assistive devices.

To UN Security Council Members

- Urgently press Israel to protect both children and adults with disabilities in Gaza, in line with its obligations under international humanitarian law, international human rights law, including the CRRPD, and Security Council Resolution 2475.

To the UN Secretary-General and the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict

- Ensure the inclusion of children with pre-existing and acquired disabilities as part of its efforts to monitor and report on grave violations against children in Palestine (and in all armed conflicts), in particular killing and maiming, attacks on schools and hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access.

To Donors and Humanitarian Organizations

- Cooperate to ensure that children with different types of disabilities are included in all humanitarian responses in Gaza to provide them equal access to food, including specific food items needed because of their disability or health condition, water, medical care, psychosocial services, rehabilitation, and education.
- Cooperate to ensure humanitarian assistance includes programming to address long-term mental health impacts and trauma.