

INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

**OBLIGATIONS OF ISRAEL IN RELATION TO THE PRESENCE AND
ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS, OTHER INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS AND THIRD STATES IN AND IN RELATION TO THE
OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY**

(REQUEST BY THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR AN
ADVISORY OPINION)

**WRITTEN REPLY TO QUESTIONS
BY THE KINGDOM OF NORWAY**

Oslo, 7 May 2025

I. Introduction

1. In its letters of 2 May 2025, the International Court of Justice [**the Court**] invited participants to the oral proceedings to provide written replies to questions put by Vice-President Sebutinde and Judges Cleveland and Gómez Robledo.
2. Pursuant to the Court's Invitation, Norway submits this written Reply.

II. Question put by Vice-President Sebutinde

3. Vice-President Sebutinde has put the following question to all participants in the proceedings:

"Which third States and other international organizations operate to provide basic services, and humanitarian and development assistance in the Occupied Palestinian Territory? To what extent have restrictions, if any, been placed upon their operation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by Israel since 2 March 2025?"

4. Regarding this question, Norway would like to submit the following observations.
5. The Question put to the Court by the General Assembly concerns the presence and activities of third parties "for the benefit of the Palestinian civilian population, and in support of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination"¹. Read in conjunction with the Question as a whole, this comprises provision of basic services, humanitarian assistance and development support, together with cooperation aimed at longer-term governance, economic and societal support, including institution-building.²
6. In the following, Norway will offer certain observations concerning the presence and activity of Norway in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in this regard.
7. This long-standing presence and activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has been carried out with the consent of institutions representing the Palestinian people, in furtherance of relevant resolutions adopted by the main bodies of the United Nations and

¹ A/RES/79/232, Dossier No. 3.

² Written Statement of Norway, para. 48.

in close cooperation with other assisting actors, including competent international organizations.

8. For more than 30 years, Norway has thus provided substantial resources in support of the Palestinian civilian population and the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, including, in the latter regard, support for institution-building. In its capacity as Chair of the International Donor Group for Palestine, known as the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC), that was established in 1993, Norway has provided financial support and convened the parties, donors and international organisations to work to secure agreement on close cooperation among donors, division of tasks and responsibilities of all those involved.
9. Since 1999, Norway has in large part relied on its Representative Office to the Palestinian Authority to oversee financial support and other assistance to the local population and in support of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Main components of this support include institutional assistance to the Palestinian Authority and other public institutions through budget support, support to civil society and multilateral organizations providing development assistance, in addition to life-saving humanitarian assistance.
10. The above-mentioned activities were facilitated by Israel, as the occupying Power, until 8 August 2024 when Israel declared, in a *note verbale* to the Norwegian Embassy in Tel Aviv, that it "will no longer facilitate Norway's representation to the Palestinian Authority", in effect leading to the closure of the Representation Office until further notice.³ The Representative Office has been located in Al-Ram, in an area of the West Bank administered by Israel. Access to the Representative Office, in addition to activities there, are highly dependent on facilitation by Israel, as the occupying Power. Implementing partners, including international and non-governmental organizations, are also subject to severe limitations imposed by Israel, affecting their activities and in turn, the effectiveness also of Norwegian support. The limitations have become even more severe with the blockade of humanitarian aid into Gaza from 2 March 2025, making it nearly impossible for implementing partners to deliver essential humanitarian assistance.

³ Notification of 8 August 2024.

11. Since 2 March 2025, further restrictions have also been imposed on the presence and activity of third States in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Such measures come in addition to significant restrictions already in place, including the decision not to facilitate the representation of Norway to the Palestinian Authority.
12. Notably, on 5 March 2025, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a Circular Note to Diplomatic Missions in Israel, notifying them that they would only allow “diplomats carrying MFA issued I.D. cards or mission employees accompanied by an I.D. carrying diplomat” to use the Al-Jeeb Crossing, which is located in an area controlled by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.
13. Consequently, local employees or diplomats without Israeli I.D. cards are expected to use other crossings. This entails significantly longer travel time and exposes them moreover to greater security risks. These risks and delays are compounded by the obstacles to movement constituted by the wall and its associated régime, which the Court, in its 2004 Wall Advisory Opinion, considered to “gravely infringe a number of rights of Palestinians residing in the territory occupied by Israel, and the infringements resulting from that route cannot be justified by military exigencies or by the requirements of national security or public order.”⁴
14. The wall and the checkpoints prevent free movement inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory. They also delay and hinder diplomatic work and efforts to provide assistance to the local population in Palestine. As Diplomatic Missions rely on their local employees in their development cooperation, these procedures severely limit the presence and activity of third States in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

⁴ Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004, p. 193 para. 137.