# Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

# Situation of persons with disabilities in the armed conflict in Israel and Gaza.

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Committee) is deeply disturbed by the deplorable armed conflict occurring in Israel and Gaza, which is resulting in the senseless killing and maiming of civilians, including many persons with disabilities. It is well-known that persons with disabilities are at heightened risk of death and all forms of harm and violence when conflict erupts, often unable to evacuate conflict zones, at risk of abandonment, and with limited access to life-sustaining health and essential supports. Many persons, including persons with disabilities also acquire impairments during armed conflict but are unable to receive immediate surgical or medical care due to the destruction of medical services and health systems.

We are appalled by violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

We are horrified by the killings atAl Ahli Arab Hospital and in al-Maghazi refugee camp in Gaza hit by strikes. Numerous health facilities and support services have been irreparably damaged or destroyed, which is compounding the situation for persons with disabilities in Gaza who require essential daily disability support and health care.

We are deeply disturbed by information we have received about several persons with disabilities, mainly children with disabilities who are being held hostage in Gaza. This information suggests that hostages have, and may still be experiencing torture and ill-treatment, but there remains very little information about their situation, how they are being treated and whether their daily essential healthcare and other disability specific supports are being met, placing their lives at immediate risk.

We are very concerned about the impact on persons with disabilities of the ongoing displacement of civilians and bombardment of Gaza, and restrictions placed on access to Gaza. This has a significant impact on humanitarian aid, including the provision of food, water, fuel, electricity and medicine.

The Committee reiterates that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires all States parties and all actors to comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and to take all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of armed conflict.

We join with the United Nations Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other United Nations mandates and special procedures in calling for:

* all parties to immediately agree to a ceasefire, and stop violence and killings;
* the immediate and safe release of all hostages, and pending their release, ensure their security and well-being, including the provision of essential disability specific supports and health care;
* the immediate, safe and unimpeded access into Gaza of disability inclusive humanitarian aid and action.

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