



Sunday, October 15, 2023

An urgent appeal to halt the ongoing and barbaric aggression by the Israeli Government on Gaza Strip

A statement by the Union of Gaza Strip Municipalities.

I write to you from Gaza with a sorrowful heart. We are shocked and saddened by the barbarism and atrocities being perpetrated against the civilian population in the Gaza Strip. These war crimes are being witnessed by the world, as they happen. The indiscriminate attacks on civilians, the use of internationally-prohibited phosphorus, and the deliberate targeting of hospitals, schools and residential facilities, are proof of the violation of international law and the basic principles of human rights. A humanitarian cataclysm is taking place, right now.

The Union of Gaza Strip Municipalities, a united body that represents the Municipalities of Gaza Strip, together with countless Palestinian civilians, implore you to take immediate and resolute action to halt these war crimes. Every day that these atrocities continue, more lives are lost, families are torn apart and wiped out, and hope fades for peace in the Middle East.

The Gaza Strip is burdened by a burgeoning population and an ongoing blockade. This very limited densely-populated area makes it difficult to find space for new schools or even graveyards, let alone green or agricultural areas.

Gaza Strip hosts more than 2.3 million inhabitants in a very small area which is 365 square kilometers. Gaza City is one of the most densely-populated cities in the world, hosting more than 1.2 million inhabitants. Over 50% of the population of Gaza is under 18 years of age.

The time has come to raise our voices internationally and appeal for an immediate end to the brutal and indiscriminate violence targeting non-combatants and children.



We call upon:

World Leaders: We urge world leaders to condemn all war crimes against the Palestinian people. This is a humanitarian crisis, and we are asking for a humane response.

International Bodies: International organizations and agencies must take a strong stance against Israel's unlawful and indiscriminate aggression on the Gaza Strip and work tirelessly to hold them accountable.

Civil Society: We, as human beings, should unite in our condemnation of war crimes by raising awareness, and supporting the humanitarian efforts to alleviate the suffering of those innocent victims whose lives have been destroyed by these flagrant breaches of the Geneva Convention.

Media: Raise the voices of the oppressed, expose the perpetrators, and tell the real stories of resilience in the face of unspeakable suffering. The media has an ethical duty and responsibility to tell the truth about what is happening and to challenge the propaganda, prejudice, bias and lies which are so widely promulgated in the mainstream western media.

We appeal for:

1. **An immediate ceasefire:** to halt the attacks on civilians. Every day that this war continues, more innocent lives are shattered, more homes reduced to rubble, and more dreams extinguished.

We must remember that behind every statistic, there is a face, a name, and a story - too often a child

2. **Humanitarian Access:** Unimpeded access for humanitarian aid to reach those in need is essential. The wounded and vulnerable must receive assistance.

3. **Accountability:** Those responsible for targeting civilians must be held accountable for their actions in the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

The time for action is now. The world has borne witness to far too much suffering, and it is our moral duty to work towards a world where peace prevails. Let us remember that humanity's strength lies in its ability to come together for a common cause, and that cause is peace.



The Union of Gaza Strip Municipalities are doing their utmost to provide the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip with essential supplies and services, even in the face of the impossible conditions: depletion of fuel, shortages of water supplies and complete shutdown of most services. The municipal emergency-response teams have been working steadfastly, in constant danger, since the first attack on Gaza. This courageous work continues, even as a major assault by Israel draws closer.

It is inhumane to deprive children of food, water and other essentials for life. Unless this genocide is stopped, the loss of life will be catastrophic and the government of Israel will have to accept responsibility.

The Israeli government's order that the people of Gaza should move to the south is entirely unreasonable as their safety cannot be guaranteed in the south. Already, those fleeing their homes and using the "safe routes" have been targeted and killed by the Israeli airstrikes.

The Israeli army is demanding that hospitals should be evacuated immediately, a task which is all but impossible without endangering life, and which the World Health Organization "WHO" has condemned as "a death sentence".

Too few people in the international community have had the courage to condemn Israel's action in this ongoing human tragedy. This is the time to rise above sectarian differences and make a concerted effort to strive for peace, a proper recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people whose situation has been ignored for so long. We live in hope - hope for peace and justice, and hope that our voice will be heard.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the victims of this aggression on Gaza, and we remain committed to working tirelessly to provide the people with the essential services to survive.

Stand with us, act now, lives are at stake.

Yahya R. Sarraj
President of Union of Gaza Strip Municipalities
Mayor of Gaza
Palestine