

ISRAEL/PALESTINE

Protecting Civilians and Pursuing a Longer-term Durable Solution

Alliance for Empowering Partnership (A4EP) is a network of independent and locally grown civil society organisations in the global south and global activists and practitioners advocating to transform aid architecture based on community realities.

We are shocked by Israel's call for over a million Palestinians to leave northern Gaza in less than 24 hours. We call on world leaders to demand that Israel rescind this order immediately and lift the siege of Gaza to let in humanitarian aid to reach the Palestinian people who have been suffering from indiscriminate bombardment by Israeli air and sea forces for the last week. The air and sea bombardment has claimed lives of more than 2300 civilian Palestinians; hit civilian infrastructure like apartment blocks, hospitals, schools, power and water supplies and left people without the most essential needs. This is an egregious breach of International Law. Under the International Humanitarian Law Israel is an occupying force and has the obligation to protect and care for the civilian population.

Forced relocation without guarantee of the safety of the civilian populations is a grave breach of International Humanitarian Law and amounts to a war crime. Additionally, the international and national humanitarian and civil society organisations based in Gaza as well as media are also reporting that even the safe passage to the south that has been announced by Israel is not safe and is being bombarded. Seventy civilians were killed by shelling yesterday while they were following evacuation orders from Israel. Hundreds of women and children have been killed and thousands have been displaced, nowhere is safe for people in Gaza.

Immediate Protection and Access to Humanitarian Aid

The latest announcements from Israel's leadership and the military indicate that things will get even worse. We the leaders of independent and locally grown civil society organisations in the global south and global activists and practitioners call for the international leaders to show stronger leadership in upholding the international law and prioritise the protection of civilians to avert a humanitarian catastrophe and grave human suffering and genocide.

We urge world leaders to:

- Do everything in their power to stop the hostilities and the atrocities being committed.
- Demand that the Government of Israel immediately rescind its orders.
- Stop weaponising the warring parties and the use of explosive weapons in populated areas targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, electricity and water systems and killing aid workers and journalists.
- Stop the siege of Gaza and facilitate the provision of essential and life-saving relief assistance, including food, water and medical supplies and safety of humanitarian works in Gaza.
- Release all captives from all sides so they can be returned safely to their families.
- Demand that borders are opened to evacuate those who need urgent medical attention.

Pursuing a Longer-term Durable Solution

Those of us who have been under colonial rule know what is to be oppressed. When people are denied the opportunity to live a dignified life and basic freedoms and are subjected to the constant threat of being thrown out of their homes, their lands being taken away, their livelihood being threatened, affected by violence perpetrated by occupying forces, face restrictions on civic and educational space and freedom of movement and no hope of justice people lose hope.

The history of the Israel/Palestine conflict is marked by missed opportunities due to the prevailing logic of using force over dissuasion, diplomacy, and a rights-based political agenda. We are witnessing an alarming turning point in the history of Israel/Palestine with unpredictable consequences for the region and the world. Avoiding further escalation of the conflict, protecting the Palestinian people and restoring justice as per the international treaty should be the main political and geostrategic priority for Europe and the rest of the world since the consequences of a far larger conflict would not only damage the interests of global citizens both in terms of security and economy but also preclude any future legitimacy of international security agenda.

We urge world leaders to:

- Inform yourself of the historical facts of this conflict and its root causes.
- Stop the state from perpetrating negative narratives.
- Address the root causes and the inequity in line with history, justice, and humanity.
- Support the Palestinian people in their struggle for liberation and homeland.
- Fully uphold international responsibilities in achieving decolonization.



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