



Your Excellency, Hissein Brahim Taha
Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

Honourable Members of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

17 October 2023

Excellencies,

Representing civil society organizations Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ardd-jo.org) and Law for Palestine (<https://law4palestine.org>), we are writing to express our concern with the ongoing assault on the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip perpetrated by the State of Israel. The actions taken by the State of Israel against the Palestinian People within the Gaza Strip amount to the crime of Genocide, as defined within the [Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#) (henceforth the Genocide Convention) and the [Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court](#) (henceforth Rome Statute), as well as represent a policy of 'ethnic cleansing.'¹ We call upon the international community, including the UN Security Council and the International Court of Justice, to address this grievous atrocity before it is too late.

Since 7th October 2023, Israel has conducted a campaign of unrelenting destruction against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, which has been under illegal Israeli occupation since 1967 and an aerial, naval and ground blockade for 16 years. These policies have been condemned as a form of collective punishment by a number of [UN Special Rapporteurs](#) and several [decision makers](#). Since the start of the current assault, Israel has launched continuous air strikes and artillery bombardments against the territory, targeting and destroying residential areas, holy sites, refugee camps, educational facilities, including UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) schools, and health facilities, including hospitals. As of the 16th of October 2023, UN estimates placed 1 million people in Gaza as being internally displaced by Israel's destruction. The Palestinian Health Ministry have recorded that at least 2670 Palestinians have been killed by Israel's indiscriminate strikes in Gaza, with at least 9600 injured, and over a 1000 people remain under debris of destroyed buildings awaiting rescue.

In addition to [launching relentless airstrikes against the Gaza Strip](#), Israel has cut off water and electricity to the territory and prevented humanitarian relief, including food, fuel and lifesaving medications, from entering the territory. Gaza, having endured an occupation for over 50 years and a siege for over 16 years, and five large scale military offences and frequent military incursions by Israel, has been dependent on foreign aid for its functioning. During this period of siege and occupation, Israel has controlled the movement of goods in and out of Gaza, limiting the development of essential infrastructure, including medical facilities.

¹ See *Prosecutor v. Radislav Krstic (Trial Judgement)*, International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), 2 August 2001. Para. 562.



Israel has and continues to retain control over what aid could enter the Gaza Strip and is not allowing the movement of food, water, fuel, medications, and other essential supplies into Gaza.

In this already catastrophic environment, Israel has taken the unprecedented step of ordering the displacement of 1 million Palestinians from north of Gaza, demanding that they evacuate to the south. Israel gave only a 24-hour window for the population to leave towards the South, without any guarantee that southern Gaza would be safe and spared from indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks. Given the widespread destruction, lack of fuel and electricity, and livelihoods, and the overburdened hospitals within Gaza, this demand was both unrealistic and deemed [“impossible to carry out” by the UN](#). Additionally, Israel has attacked convoys of civilians fleeing the north on supposed safe routes, violating their own promises of safe passage. Many Palestinians see this order to leave areas of Gaza and the possibility of an exodus into Sinai as the start of a ‘second Nakba,’ referencing Israel’s displacement of Palestinians from their homes across historic Palestine in 1948.

Israel’s attacks against the Gaza Strip and its Palestinian population since October 7th have consistently violated jus in bello rules: these attacks have violated the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, wantonly killing thousands of civilians and targeting essential infrastructure, including homes and hospitals, starvation and displacement of vulnerable civilian population, and spreading terror throughout the civilian population. In addition to breaching the most fundamental principles of IHL, Israel’s attacks have been carried out with unlawful weapons, such as white phosphorus. To compound this, Israel has ordered the ethnic cleansing of half of the civilian population. These violations have been widespread, systematic and intentional, taking place across the densely populated territory of Gaza. These violations are to be situated within the broader Israeli plan to settler-colonise the 22% that remains of historic Palestine – apartheid, annexation and ethnic cleansing have been fundamental pillars of such endeavour.

Several scholars specialised in Genocide Studies have concluded that Israel’s actions committed in the Gaza Strip and statements made by Israeli officials combined together show a clear intent to bring about Genocide, in the meaning of the Genocide convention, against the Palestinian people within Gaza. The Genocide Convention is clear: Genocide comprises of ‘acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group’.² The convention states that deliberately killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm, deliberately inflicting group conditions of life calculated to bring about the group’s destruction, birth prevention and forcibly transferring children to a different group constitutes a genocidal act.³ The Convention further highlights the illegality of conspiring to commit Genocide, the direct incitement of Genocide and being complicit in Genocide.⁴

Statements from leading figures of the Israeli Government and armed forces highlight Israel’s genocidal intent towards the Palestinian people within the Gaza Strip. Statements such as IDF Spokesperson Daniel Hagari’s comment, that the IDF’s “emphasis is on damage, not accuracy”, exposes a strategy aimed at the destruction of Palestinians within Gaza. Former Israeli Prime Minister Bennett shockingly responded to concerns about life support and incubator power cuts within the Gaza Strip by saying “are you seriously asking me about

² Article 2, Genocide Convention

³ Article 2, Genocide Convention

⁴ Article 3, Genocide Convention



Palestinian civilians? What is wrong with you?” while the current Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has described Gaza as a “city of evil”. The disregard for Palestinian life can be seen in Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant’s description of Palestinians as “human animals”. These statements along with Israeli Minister May Golan’s call for war against the whole of the Gaza Strip all showcase an intention to commit Genocide. The actions currently underway against the Palestinian people prove this intent. Through the actions taken against Gaza by the Israeli armed forces and statements of Israeli officials, including the demands that over 1 million Gazans leave the north of Gaza when it is impossible, there is clear evidence of both genocidal intent and practice.

We further raise concerns about the complicity of states and state officials that have supported Israel’s actions against the Palestinian people. The International community has a clear duty to prevent any act of Genocide and must move immediately to address Israel’s actions. State officials that enable and assist in Israel’s Genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza are accomplices to Israel’s crimes and should be treated as such by the United Nations, International Criminal Court and the international community as a whole.

Therefore, ARDD and L4P call upon Your Excellencies:

- To, urgently and effectively, push for an intervention and stop the atrocious crime of Genocide perpetrated by the State of Israel against the Palestinian people, employing all means available, including sanctions.
- To demand the UN Security Council addresses the violence and ensures that the international humanitarian law and human rights law is respected and the besieged Palestinian people in the Gaza strip are protected against any further violations perpetrated by Israel and Israel’s armed forces.
- To refer the situation to the International Court of Justice under article 9 of the Genocide Convention, akin to the precedents set by Myanmar and Ukraine.
- To acknowledge Israel’s oppressive dominance as a settler-colonial power over the Palestinian people and put an end to its unlawful manifestations, including the apartheid regime and the occupation, while re-affirming Palestinians’ inalienable right to self-determination, which entails the right of return of all the Palestinians displaced from their homes throughout the past 75 years.

Action must be taken immediately. Should the international community fail to act now, it will be complicit in both a second ‘Nakba’ and Israeli Genocide against the Palestinian people.

Sincerely,

On behalf of ARDD

Ms. Samar Muhareb
Chief, Executive Officer

On behalf of L4P

Mr. Ihsan Adel
Executive Director