

Amman, November 24, 2023

Call for action to the government of Spain regarding the situation in Gaza

To the Attention of the Government of Spain,

The undersigned organizations are calling upon the Government of Spain for a dual action aimed at putting an end to severe violations of international law and international humanitarian law occurring since October 9th in the occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank.

Firstly, as a democratically elected sovereign government, the undersigned organizations request the Government of Spain to firmly and unequivocally condemn the illegal/criminal attacks perpetrated by the State of Israel against the Palestinian civilian population. Consequently, we urge the Spanish government to take all the diplomatic, political, and economic measures at its disposal to denounce and cease such transgressions of international humanitarian law.

Secondly, in its capacity as the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union, the undersigned organizations further request the Government of Spain to initiate an urgent consultation process aimed at establishing a joint action among EU countries to repudiate and halt these violations.

It is important to note that numerous human rights defense organizations, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and B'Tselem, have demonstrated that abusive practices by Israeli occupying forces constitute crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution. Additionally, several United Nations experts and international lawyers have sounded the alarm about the risk of genocide in Gaza. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the number of deceased Palestinians reached 14,532 as of November 23, 2023. While attention is focused on the dire situation of Palestinians in the region, more than 208 Palestinians (OHCHR, 11/22/23) have been unlawfully killed by occupation forces and Israeli settlers. This adds to the 192 Palestinians killed since the beginning of this year in the West Bank (Human Rights Watch, 11/22/23).

Our plea is an urgent call from a standpoint defending international law and humanitarian law. After over five weeks of indiscriminate attacks and siege imposed on the Palestinian population, each passing day constitutes a violation of human rights or a certain death sentence for hundreds of individuals, including children. *Qui tacet, consentire videtur*. The lack of action and a clear, unequivocal stance by the international community amount to a

carte blanche for the continuous violation of these fundamental rights by the State of Israel.

The crimes against humanity committed during over 75 years of occupation are compounded by the countless war crimes witnessed in these last months. On average, a child dies and two are injured every 10 minutes during the war, turning Gaza into a "graveyard of children," as per the UN Secretary-General. Nearly 200 doctors, 109 UNRWA members, 64 journalists, human rights defenders, and frontline workers have been killed, while tens of families spanning five generations have been annihilated (PCBS, 11/22/2023). To this tragedy, one must add the total or partial destruction of crucial civilian infrastructure: 26 hospitals were attacked and rendered non-functional, 85 mosques were damaged, 45,000 homes were destroyed, and 56 ambulances were targeted. Additionally, there is a lack of access to food, clean water, fuel, and communications (PCBS, 11/23/23).

Several groups of lawyers have recently filed a complaint with the International Criminal Court (ICC) arguing that Israel's actions meet the crime for genocide. As a peremptory norm, a cornerstone of international law, states and the international community as a whole have "the obligation to prevent heinous crimes, including genocide." Furthermore, Article I of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, of which the Spanish State is a signatory, obliges states to take measures to prevent and punish such international crimes.

The Government of Spain has promised its voters the consolidation of a progressive rule of law that defends the rights of those in utmost need. On the international stage, the Government of Spain has both a moral and legal duty to support positions taken by states such as Bolivia, South Africa, and Belize, and to spearhead a change within the European Union. Countries like Ireland, Belgium, and to some extent France, seem open to repudiating the acts committed by the State of Israel. We believe that a strong appeal from the Presidency of the Council of the European Union could provide the necessary momentum to encourage a change in stance on this moral abyss.

Lastly, we want to express that you will have our full support in executing the requested actions.

Sincerely,

The Signatories below:

- The Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD)
- Jordan National NGOs Forum (JONAF) including its **40 Member**