

## Defiance in the Face of Genocide:

### A Call for Justice and Decolonisation on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

Today, on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and everyday, we steadfastly honour the indomitable spirit and unyielding resilience of the Palestinian people. We remember the aspirations and stories of all Palestinians killed by the Israeli forces and settlers; all Palestinian prisoners and detainees, their birthdays passing in the confines of detention; and all Palestinian homes destroyed and memories obliterated, and we tightly hold onto the keys of our homes, handed down by our grandparents.

Today and everyday, we remain confident that the relentless struggle for decolonisation, justice and freedom will ultimately prevail. Witnessing people of conscience worldwide fearlessly demonstrate and raise their voices against Israel's genocide and Zionist settler-colonial apartheid regime, even in the face of potential suppression, serves as a powerful reminder: the truth cannot be silenced and oppression cannot be normalised.

For over a century, the Zionist settler-colonial movement has pursued the elimination of the Palestinian people, and the appropriation of our lands. Culminating in the *Nakba* of 1948, Zionist militias destroyed over 500 villages and towns, and committed massacres across Palestine, killing 15,000 Palestinians and rendered around 800,000 Palestinians refugees or internally displaced. Today, the majority of Palestinians in Gaza are refugees from that mass forced displacement. 75 years on, Israel is escalating its colonial violence against Palestinians all across historic Palestine, entrenching its settler-colonial apartheid regime, including through its genocidal military campaign against 2.3 million Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip.

As Palestinian civil society, we continue to witness, live and document the heavy price for the continuation of that colonial project in our land and the subjugation of our people. Israel's structural regimes of settler-colonialism, apartheid and occupation maintained through systematic human rights violations and international crimes, operate to deny the Palestinian people their inalienable right to self-determination. For decades, we have advocated for realising our inalienable rights and to end the ongoing *Nakba*, manifested through Israel's persistent denial of the right of return of millions of Palestinian refugees and continued forced displacement and dispossession across historic Palestine.

As the international community wrongfully champions Israel’s so-called “right to self-defence”, genocide is unfolding against the Palestinian people in Gaza. Since 7 October 2023 in Gaza, at least 15,000 Palestinians have been killed - around 70 percent of whom are children and women; 60 percent of all housing units have been either destroyed or damaged; and around 80% of the population has been displaced. Israel has also dramatically tightened the 16-year-old illegal closure on Gaza, impeding the entrance of food, water, electricity, and fuel, as well as medical and humanitarian aid. On 24 October 2023, a leaked document from the Israeli Ministry of Intelligence outlined a plan to ethnically cleanse Gaza, forcibly transfer its inhabitants to Egypt’s Sinai peninsula. Notably, 36 UN independent experts have pointed to the forced displacement of Palestinians in Gaza as a critical indicator of “genocide in the making” in Gaza.

However, it is clear that Israel’s warfare is not only against Gaza, but against the entire Palestinian people. Since 7 October 2023, Israel has been carrying out a concerted aggression against Palestinians across historic Palestine, vividly illustrating the expansionist and annexationist aims of its settler-colonial apartheid regime. Over the past 53 days, the Israeli military and settlers have killed 237 Palestinians, including 62 children, in the occupied West Bank, including eastern Jerusalem, compared to 203 killings in over nine months since the beginning of 2023 – which was already the deadliest period for Palestinians in the West Bank since 2004. Furthermore, 64 Palestinian homes were demolished or damaged by the Israeli occupying authorities and forces throughout the occupied West Bank, including Jerusalem, forcibly displacing 295 Palestinians, including 135 children, between 7 October and 28 November 2023.

In daily raids across the West Bank since the start of the military aggression, Israel has arrested over 3,300 Palestinians, while further imposing punitive measures on the existing 5,200 Palestinian prisoners and detainees. Israel has also punitively revoked the work permits of tens of thousands of Palestinians from Gaza, while detaining thousands who were inside the Green Line on 7 October 2023. Meanwhile, settler violence has doubled since 7 October 2023, resulting in the killing of at least nine Palestinians, damage of properties, and the forcible transfer of 1,041 Palestinians from 15 communities across the West Bank – all while settlers are encouraged by the Israeli government to carry more arms. Furthermore, Israel is escalating its crackdown on freedom of speech and assembly amongst Palestinians with Israeli citizenship and Palestinian Jerusalemites, with mass arrests over social media posts or participating in “banned” protests in solidarity with Gaza.

The international community has deliberately failed to take concrete action against Israel’s colonisation, systematic fragmentation and institutional oppression of the Palestinian people. Decades of international impunity have emboldened Israel to wipe out families, kill, imprison, and besiege Palestinians, while destroying our homes, appropriating our lands, and forcibly displacing us. The international community, by refusing to hold Israel accountable for its crimes, by failing to impose countermeasures to end the illegal situation, and

by failing to recognise and address the root causes underpinning Israel’s violations, is aiding Israel in the generational denial of our right to self-determination, our liberty, and our freedom.

Israel’s decades-long oppression of the Palestinian people must be addressed with accountability and countermeasures. As we witness and advocate to prevent and end the unfolding genocide, we reiterate that Israel’s crimes against the Palestinian people will continue unless the root causes of its violence are dismantled. The dismantlement of Israel’s settler colonial apartheid regime must involve the immediate end to the occupation, and the return of Palestinian refugees to their homes. A decolonisation praxis requires the dismantling of all structures of domination and oppression and the collective realisation of the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination.

The Palestinian struggle, as the struggles of all those oppressed, is a shared responsibility, transcending borders and backgrounds. The path to justice has been long, but it is a path we are unwaveringly committed to walking until the rights of the Palestinian people are realised. Each day, an ever-growing multitude joins us in solidarity, underscoring that shared values resonate within the hearts of people worldwide. Together, we raise our collective voice against the enduring injustice perpetuated by Israel, steadfast in our pursuit to bring an end to decades-long oppression of the Palestinian people.

## What Can You Do to Help?

1. Write to your political representative calling for a ceasefire ,recognition of Israel’s apartheid and stopping genocide in Gaza.
2. Pressure your government to impose a two-way arms embargo and economic sanctions on Israel.
3. Call on your local municipality and government to prevent trade and procurement in settlement goods which perpetuates the colonisation of Palestinian territory.