

Human Rights Council
30th Special Session on the grave human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development

Joint statement of solidarity with Palestinian people and call to end the Israeli occupation
#GazaUnderAttack
#PalestineUnderAttack
#FreePalestine

This statement is made on behalf of 8 women's rights and feminist organisations and activists from across the world. We stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people and their right to resist Israeli systems of settler colonialism and apartheid, and the ongoing oppression, dispossession, displacement, ethnic cleansing, and human rights violations they have faced for decades.¹ We also call on the international community and global feminist movements to speak out, demand the end of impunity for the continuing violation and, following the words of Palestinian feminist activists, be prepared to "call the oppression of occupation by its name."²

Since 1948, Israel has established an apartheid regime through the strategic fragmentation of the Palestinian people. Palestinians cannot meet, group, live together, or exercise their collective rights, including the right to self-determination. For decades, Israel has institutionalized – through its laws, policies, and practices – an apartheid regime of racial domination and oppression over the Palestinian people as a whole on both sides of the Green Line and as refugees and exiles abroad who are denied the right of return. Israel's apartheid regime maintains Jewish Israeli superiority through myriad human rights violations, including killing, mass arbitrary arrest, torture, collective punishment, denial of the right of return, and the silencing of opposition to apartheid.

In recent weeks, the war against the Palestinian people has escalated, drawing renewed attention as the Israeli military fired missiles and shells into densely populated areas of Gaza,

¹ Al-Haq – Law in the Service of Man, BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, the Civic Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem, the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, and Habitat International Coalition – Housing and Land Rights Network, *Joint Parallel Report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on Israel's Seventeenth to Nineteenth Periodic Reports*, 10 November 2019, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/ISR/INT_CERD_NGO_ISR_39700_E.pdf.

² Karama [@el_karama], *To global feminist movements: speak up, be prepared to call the oppression of occupation by its name. Palestine is a feminist issue. Don't tire, don't give up - @SandieHanna* [Tweet], Twitter, 20 May 2021. https://twitter.com/el_karama/status/1395396834273730561. See also AWID (2021), "What's Happening in Palestine? Possibilities for Feminist Solidarity" [Facebook Live], Facebook, 20 May 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/AWIDWomensRights/videos/220112876287607/>.

resulting in more than 237 deaths including 26 women and 61 children,³ more than 6,287 Palestinians injured,⁴ and 66,000 internally displaced people seeking shelter in 58 UN-run schools.⁵ The 11-day attack included targeting of civilian populations living in Gaza - an area that is widely described as “the world’s largest open-air prison”⁶ - leaving families with nowhere to flee in the midst of a pandemic. A recent report by the United Nations Officer for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that the attacks have damaged 51 education facilities including 46 schools and two kindergartens, six hospitals and 11 primary healthcare centres, and Gaza’s electricity and water supply networks, with an average power supply of 7 hours per day and impacting the delivery of basic services, including access to drinking water.⁷

While we welcome the ceasefire announced on 21 May 2020 - the result of tireless advocacy by Palestinians and worldwide solidarity actions - this measure is not enough. It is a temporary solution with evidence of police violence and oppression persisting during this time, with Palestinian worshippers recently being assaulted at Al Asqa Mosque.⁸ The Israeli occupation and systems of settler colonialism and apartheid, along with the longstanding impunity afforded to the Israeli government, must end. The complicity of powerful countries and blocs, such as the US, the EU, Canada, and the OAS, among others, in the maintenance of settler colonial, apartheid systems must no longer be tolerated. Every country is complicit in the violations of Palestinian people through their arms transfer to Israel used in the killings of Palestinian people. It is incumbent on the international community to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people toward addressing these root causes of the loss of life and destruction witnessed in recent weeks in order to achieve lasting justice and peace.

We demand the international community uphold the Palestinian right to self-determination and recognize and condemn Israel’s apartheid regime that has been imposed over the Palestinian people as a whole. The international community/Human Rights Council should address the root

³ The Palestinian NGO Forum to Combat Violence Against Women (Al Muntada), Amal Coalition to Combat Violence against Women in the Gaza Strip, and Fada Coalition - Palestinian Women Against Violence, “Press release: Palestinians are Uprising against Racist Zionist Colonization towards Freedom and Justice”, 19 May 2021, available at https://twitter.com/el_karama/status/1395007288826634248. See also OHCHR, “Gaza-Israel escalation: End violence now, then work to end occupation, say UN experts”, 18 May 2021, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27102&LangID=E>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ OCHA, “Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt): Flash Update #10: Escalation in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Israel”, 19 May 2021, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/flash_update_10_escalations_of_hostilities.pdf.

⁶ Mohammed Haddad, “Mapping Gaza: Schools, hospitals, refugee camps and more” *Al Jazeera*, 21 May 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/21/mapping-gaza-hospitals-schools-refugee-camps-palestine>.

⁷ OCHA, “Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt): Flash Update #10: Escalation in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Israel”, 19 May 2021, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/flash_update_10_escalations_of_hostilities.pdf.

⁸ Al Jazeera, “Backed by Israeli police, Jewish settlers enter Al-Aqsa compound”, *Al Jazeera*, 23 May 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/23/backed-by-israeli-police-jewish-settlers-storm-al-aqsa-compound>.

causes of Israeli violations on both sides of the Green Line and establish an ongoing commission of enquiry. They should also immediately introduce effective measures, including but not limited to, sanctions, an arms embargo, and travel bans to ensure that they do not contribute, directly or indirectly, to the continued maintenance of apartheid. Urgently, there should be reconstitution of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid and the UN Centre against Apartheid.

Endorsed by:

International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific

Sexual Rights Initiative

Centro de Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos - PROMSEX, Perú

AKAHATA - Equipo de Trabajo en Sexualidades y Géneros, Argentina-LAC

AWID - Association for Women's Rights in Development

Federation for Women and Family Planning, Poland

Realizing Sexual and Reproductive Justice (RESURJ)

Center for Reproductive Rights

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