

Declaration of Conscience and Concern of Global Intellectuals on Gaza Genocide

On November 30, the Government of Israel resumed the genocidal onslaught it inflicted on Palestinians in Gaza after a much overdue but brief “humanitarian pause.” In doing so, Israel has ignored the worldwide protests of people as well as the fervent pleas of moral, religious, and political authority figures throughout the world to convert the hostage/prisoner exchange pause into a permanent ceasefire. The overriding intention was to avert the worsening of the ordeal of the Gazan population. Israel was urged to choose the road to peace not only for humanitarian reasons but also for the sake of achieving real security and respect for both Palestinians and Israelis. Yet now the bodies are again piling up, the Gaza medical system can no longer offer treatment to most of those injured, and threats of widespread starvation and disease intensify daily.

Under these circumstances, this Declaration calls not only for the denunciation of Israel’s genocidal assault but also for taking effective action to permanently prevent its repetition. We come together due to the urgency of the moment, which obliges global intellectuals to stand against the ongoing horrific ordeal of the Palestinian people and, most of all, to implore action by those who have the power, and hence the responsibility, to do so. Israel’s continuing rejection of a permanent ceasefire intensifies our concerns. Many weeks of cruel devastation caused by Israel’s grossly disproportionate response to the October 7 attack, continues to exhibit Israel’s vengeful fury. That fury can in no way be excused by the horrendous violence of Hamas against civilians in Israel or inapplicable claims of self-defense against an occupied population.

Indeed, even the combat pause seems to have been agreed upon by the Israeli government mainly to ease pressures from Israeli citizens demanding greater efforts to secure the release of the hostages. The United States government evidently reinforced this pressure as a belated, display to the world that it was not utterly insensitive to humanitarian concerns. Even this gesture was undercut before the pause started by the defiant public insistence of Prime Minister Netanyahu to resume the war immediately after the pause. It is more appropriate to interpret these seven days without combat as a pause in Israel’s genocidal operations in Gaza rather than as a humanitarian pause. If truly humanitarian, it would not have crushed hopes of ending the genocide and conjointly resuming efforts to negotiate the conditions for an enduring and just peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

The revival of this military campaign waged by Israel against the civilian population of Gaza amounts to a repudiation of UN authority, of law and morality in general, and of simple human decency. The collaborative approval of Israel's action by the leading liberal democracies in the Global

West, particularly the United States and the United Kingdom, accentuates our anguish and disgust. These governments pride themselves on adherence to the rule of law and yet have so far limited their peacemaking role to PR pressures on Israel to conduct its exorbitant actions in a more discreet manner. Such moves do little more than soften the sharpest edges of Israel's genocidal behavior in Gaza. At the same time continuing to endorse Israel's false rationale of self-defense, which is inapplicable in a Belligerent Occupation framework established by the UN in the aftermath of the 1967 War, shielded this brazenly criminal conduct from legal condemnation and political censure at the UN and elsewhere.

We deplore the reality that these governments continue to lend overall support to Israel's announced intention to pursue its combat goals, which entail the commission of severe war crimes that Tel Aviv does not even bother to deny. These crimes include the resumption of intensive bombing and shelling of civilian targets, as well as reliance on the cruel tactics of forced evacuation, the destruction of hospitals, bombings of refugee camps and UN buildings that are sheltering many thousands of civilians and the destruction of entire residential neighborhoods. In addition, Israel has been greenlighting settler-led violence and escalating ethnic cleansing efforts in the West Bank. Given these developments we urge national governments to embargo and halt all shipments of weapons to Israel, especially the United States and the United Kingdom, which should also withdraw their provocative naval presences from the Eastern Mediterranean; we urge the UN Security Council and General Assembly to so decree without delay.

We also support the Palestinian unconditional right as the indigenous people of the land to give or withhold approval to any proposed solution bearing upon their underlying liberation struggle.

The deteriorating situation poses an extreme humanitarian emergency challenging the UN system to respond with unprecedented urgency. We commend UNICEF for extending desperately needed help to wounded children as well as to children whose parents were killed or seriously injured every continuing effort. We also commend WHO for doing all in its power to help injured Palestinians, especially pregnant women and children, and to insist as effectively as possible on the immediate reconstruction and reopening of hospitals destroyed and damaged by Israeli attacks. We especially commend UNRWA for continuing the sheltering of many thousands of Palestinians in Gaza displaced by the war and for providing other relief in the face of heavy staff casualties from Israeli repeated bombardment of UN buildings. Beyond this, UNESCO should be implored to recognize threats to religious and cultural sites and give its highest priority to their protection against all manner of violation, especially the Masjid al-Aqsa; the Israeli government should be warned about its unconditional legal accountability for protecting these sites.

We also propose that the UN Human Rights Council should act now to establish a high-profile expert commission of inquiry mandated to ascertain the facts and law arising from the Hamas attack and Israel's military operations in Gaza since October 7, 2023. The commission should offer recommendations in its report pertaining to the responsibility and accountability of principal perpetrators for violations of human rights and humanitarian norms that constitute war crimes and genocide.

We also view the desperation of the situation to engage the responsibility of governments, international institutions, and civil society to act as well as to speak, and use their diplomatic and economic capabilities to the utmost with the objective of bringing the violence in Gaza to an end now!

As signatories of this Declaration, we unequivocally call for an immediate ceasefire and the initiation of diplomatic negotiations under respected and impartial auspices, aimed at terminating Israel's long and criminally abusive occupation of Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. This process must be fully respectful of the inalienable right to self-determination of the Palestinian people and take proper account of relevant UN resolutions.



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Signatories

1. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Former Foreign Minister and Prime Minister, Türkiye;
2. Richard Falk, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories Occupied since 1967 (2008-2014), Professor of International Law Emeritus, Princeton University;
3. Dr. Moncef Marzouki, Former President of Tunisia;
4. Mahathir Mohamed, Former Prime Minister of Malaysia;
5. Georges Abi-Saab, Professor Emeritus, Graduate Institute Geneva and Cairo University, Former UN Advisor to the Secretary Generals of the UN; Former Judge of the International Court of Justice, Egypt;
6. Mairead Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate (1976), Member of Russell Tribunal, Northern Ireland;
7. Amr Moussa, Former Secretary General of the Arab League, Former Foreign Minister, Member of the UN's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change for International Peace and Security, Egypt;
8. M. Javad Zarif, Professor, University of Tehran, Former Foreign Minister, Iran;
9. Hamid Albar, Former Foreign Minister, First Chancellor of the Asia e University, Malaysia;
10. Brigette Mabandla, Former Minister of Justice and anti-Apartheid Activist, South Africa;
11. Judith Butler, Professor, University of California at Berkeley; Feminist Studies, USA;
12. Kamal Hossein, Former Foreign Minister, Bangladesh;
13. Paulo Sergio, Professor of Political Science (USP) and Former Minister of Human Rights, Brazil;
14. Chris Hedges, Pulitzer-prize Winning Reporter and Former Middle East Bureau Chief for The New York Times, USA;
15. Tu Weiming, Member of UN Group of Eminent Persons for the Dialogue Among Civilizations, Professor Emeritus, Harvard University, USA; Founding Director of the Institute for Advanced Humanistic Studies, Peking University, China;

16. John Esposito, Professor of International Relations and the Founding Director of the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University; Member of High Level Group of the UN Alliance of Civilizations, USA;
17. Arundhati Roy, Author of God of Small Things, Human Rights Activist, India;
18. Susan Abulhawa, Palestinian Novelist, Author of Mornings in Jenin, USA;
19. Hans von Sponeck, Former UN Assistant Secretary-General, Faculty Member at Conflict Research Center, University of Marburg, Germany;
20. Angela Davis, Berkeley, USA;
21. Hilal Elver, Professor of International Law, UN Special Rapporteur on Right to Food (2014-2020), Türkiye;
22. Abdullah Ahsan, Professor of History International Islamic University Malaysia and Istanbul Şehir University, USA;
23. Phyllis Bennis, Journalist, Author and Social Activist, Institute of Policy Studies, USA;
24. Noura Erakat, Activist and Professor, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, Co-founder of Jadalliyah, USA;
25. Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Former UN Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development; Deputy Director UN FAO, Malaysia;
26. Victoria Brittain, Former Foreign Editor of the Guardian, worked closely with anti-Apartheid Movement, Founder of the annual Palestine Festival of Literature, UK;
27. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak FBA, Professor, Columbia University, received Kyoto Prize in Arts and Philosophy 2012, India;
28. Ali Bardakoğlu, Professor of Theology, Former President of Directorate of Religious Affairs, Türkiye;
29. Mustafa Ceric, Grand Mufti Emeritus of Bosnia, President of the World Bosniak Congress, co-recipient UNESCO Felix Houphouet-Bouigny Peace Prize, Bosnia and Herzegovina;
30. Maung Zarni, Human Rights Activist, Member of the Board of Advisors of Genocide Watch, Co-founder of Free Burma Coalition, Free Rohingya Coalition and Forces of Renewal Southeast Asia, Myanmar;
31. Joseph Camilleri, Emeritus Professor, La Trobe University, Co-Convener of SHAPE Melbourne, Australia;
32. Mahmood Mamdani, Herbert Lehman Professor of Government Columbia University, Chancellor of Kampala University, Uganda;
33. Dayan Jayatilleka, Former Ambassador to UN (Geneva), France; Journalist, Sri Lanka;

34. Elisabeth Weber, Professor of German Literature and Philosophy, University of California at Santa Barbara, Germany/USA;
35. Marjorie Cohn, Dean of the Peoples Academy of International Law, Professor Emerita, Thomas Jefferson School of Law, USA;
36. Jan Oberg, Chairman of the Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research, Sweden;
37. Ramzy Baroud, Author, Academic, Editor of The Palestine Chronicle, Palestine/ USA;
33. Saree Makdisi, Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of California, Author of Palestine Inside Out: An Everyday Occupation, USA;
39. Roger Leger, Retired Professor of Philosophy at the Military College of Saint-Jean, Québec, Canada;
40. Usman Bugaje, Professor, Former Adviser to the Vice President of Nigeria, Nigeria;
41. Chandra Muzaffar, President, International Movement for a Just World (JUST), Malaysia;
42. Avery F. Gordon, Professor Emerita University of California Santa Barbara, USA;
43. Arlene Elizabeth Clemesha, Professor of Contemporary Arab History at the University of São Paulo (USP), Brazil;
44. Ömer Dinçer, Professor, Former Minister of Education, Former President of Şehir University, Türkiye;
45. Fethi Jarray, Former Education Minister, current Chairperson of the National Mechanism on Torture Prevention, Tunisia;
46. Alfred de Zayas, Former UN Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order, USA;
47. Walid Joumblatt, Member of Lebanese Parliament, Leader of the Progressive Socialist Party, Lebanon;
48. Elmira Akhmetova, Professor at the Institute of Knowledge Integration in Georgia, Russia;
49. Sami Al-Arian, Professor, Director of Center for Islam and Global Affairs (CIGA) at Istanbul Zaim University, Türkiye;
50. George Sabra, Signatory of the Damascus Declaration (2005), Former President of the Syrian National Council, Syria;
51. Ray McGovern, Activist, Veterans for Peace, Supporter of the anti-war group Not in Our Name, USA;
52. Juan Cole, Professor of History, The University of Michigan, Former Editor of The International Journal of Middle East Studies, USA;

53. Penny Green, Professor of Law and Globalization, Director, International State Crime Initiative Queen Mary University of London, UK;
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75. Nabeel Rajab, Founder and former president of the Gulf Center for Human Rights; Former Deputy Secretary-General of the International Federation for Human Rights, Recipient of the Ion Ratiu Award for Democracy and Human Rights, Bahrain;
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79. Ayçin Kantoğlu, Author, Türkiye;
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99. Khawla Mattar, the Director of the United Nations Information center in Cairo, Former UN Deputy Special Envoy for Syria, Bahrain;
100. Aslam Abdullah, Senior Journalist, USA/India;
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105. Bridget Anderson, Professor of Migration, Mobilities and Citizenship, University of Bristol, UK;
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