

Statement / Israel-Palestine: the International Federation for Human Rights opposes violence, escalation and double standards

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The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) is deeply concerned about the current hostilities in Israel-Palestine, which are causing widespread destruction and hundreds of civilian casualties. More than ever, the international community must uphold its moral and legal responsibilities to break this endless cycle of violence. To ensure accountability

for these heinous crimes, international law must be applied without discrimination or double standards, in recognition that all human lives are equal.

Jerusalem, Ramallah, Paris, 11 October 2023. The recent Hamas offensive in Israel has led to immense violence and retaliatory attacks on the Palestinians. The situation on the ground is extremely worrying, especially following the total closure imposed by Israel against two million Palestinians in Gaza, who now have no access to food, water, electricity, petrol or medicine. Indiscriminate airstrikes, the closure, and the starvation of Gaza's civilian population are clearly prohibited by international humanitarian law and constitute war crimes. It is urgent to do everything possible to obtain an immediate ceasefire from all parties, to take concrete measures to free civilian hostages and to protect the Palestinian people from disproportionate Israeli retaliatory measures, and ensure the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza.

This cycle of violence is a predictable and expected result of Israel's illegal occupation and apartheid regime that has lasted too long despite calls and warnings issued by human rights organisations and United Nations mechanisms. In a time marked by extreme tension, the radicalisation of discourse and unconditional support to Israel, it is important to call for de-escalation and an immediate ceasefire to protect the civilian populations, who are the main victims.

FIDH recalls that as long as the international community refuses to address the root causes of the ongoing hostilities, no just and lasting peace will ever be achieved. The blockade and closure of Gaza has been going on for 16 years, caging two million Palestinians in an open-air prison which was declared 'unlivable' by the UN. The closure of Gaza is not an isolated issue, but an integral part of Israel's apartheid against the Palestinian people. Israel's apartheid regime, established and maintained through a system of inherently discriminatory laws, policies and practices, is premised on the perpetual denial of

the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and return.

Despite these grave violations, no genuine domestic investigations or prosecutions of these crimes have ever occurred. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has been investigating the Situation in Palestine since 2021. Notably, the ongoing atrocities also fall within the ICC's jurisdiction. An active ICC investigation holds profound significance for victims and survivors, offering the prospect of accountability, redress, and global recognition of their suffering. It reinforces the principle that impunity for grave crimes (no matter where they are committed) is unacceptable, fostering hope and paving the path to a just and lasting peace. Yet, this investigation has alarmingly not been prioritised nor properly resourced, compared to other active ICC investigations.

FIDH calls on:

- The international community to take responsibility and not further fuel the ongoing illegal situation and take concrete measures to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people in the face of indiscriminate Israeli attacks;
- The protection and unconditional release of civilian Israeli hostages captured by Palestinian armed groups and demands that the Israeli authorities refrain from any form of collective punishment against Palestinians in Gaza and immediately lift the blockade and closure of Gaza;
- The international community to enforce UN resolutions, and to demand total, immediate and unconditional withdrawal from the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, and the realisation of the right of return of Palestinian refugees as enshrined in the UN General Assembly Resolution 194;
- The ICC Prosecutor, Karim Khan KC, to expedite the

investigation into the Situation in Palestine, and to proactively inform all parties to the Israel-Palestine conflict that the investigation of international crimes in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 (namely, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem) is ongoing and includes any and all continuing crimes;

- States Parties to the ICC to unequivocally and unconditionally support the work of the Office of the Prosecutor in its independent investigation of international crimes committed in Palestine. It is essential to ensure that the ICC as a whole is adequately resourced to carry out this mandate effectively;
- Israel to end the colonisation, apartheid regime and annexation policies imposed on Palestinian people, which are the root causes underlying the continuing waves of conflict in the territory.