

A statement issued by Palestinian civil society organizations condemning Israel's War Crimes in Gaza and Lebanon

Representatives of several parties, political groups and Palestinian civil society organizations convened in the city of Ramallah upon the invitation of the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO). The meeting discussed current conditions in light of the blatant Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip, the atrocities that are being committed by Israeli troops against the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples, and the serious escalation in the region in general following Israeli aggression on Lebanon.

Participants stressed that the goals of the Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip and in Lebanon are evidently much broader than a mere reaction to the capture of Israeli soldiers during military operations by the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance.

On the Palestinian front, the Israeli military operation comes in the context of a comprehensive integrated policy to destroy the infrastructure of the Palestinian society. It is another attempt to weaken the Palestinian entity and sabotage any hope for development. The Israeli invasion came specifically at a time of Palestinian political conciliation, as reflected in the signing of the National Conciliation Document, which translated the Palestinian consensus into concrete terms. The current atrocities committed by the Israeli military during this invasion demonstrate yet again how far Israeli disregard for Palestinian human life can reach. More than 90 people have been killed and hundreds (mostly women and children) have been injured. In addition, there has been an all-out destruction of vital Palestinian infrastructure, including the main power plant, which has brought Gaza to the verge of humanitarian disaster in terms of shortages in basic food items and medical supplies.

On the Lebanese front, the barbaric Israeli aggression shows the complete picture, since the goals of that aggression are embedded in the conditions and dictates that the Israeli government wants to impose on the region so that it succumbs to Israeli-American hegemony. All international attempts to secure an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon failed as a result of resolute objections by the US, which only days ago vetoed a UNSC resolution aimed at ending Israel's attack on Gaza. Simultaneously, the Israeli government's intransigent position against engaging in any negotiations over the fate of its captured soldiers has made conditions worse, despite attempts by several parties to reach a negotiable solution.

In light of all these developments, the question is raised whether the political frame that has been endorsed in Oslo and at a later stage through the road map by the quartet is still valid as the peace process has been rendered obsolete by the war crimes committed by Israel, through actions of indiscriminate killings, massive destruction of infrastructure, and inflicting humanitarian disaster on the civilian population at large. This is especially true in view of a weakened Palestinian Authority that does not have significant control on the ground, and at the time when the Israeli government has illegally arrested a large number of the democratically-elected members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and of the Palestinian government.

Within this context, the application of the Fourth Geneva Convention in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip, requires the call for the provision of immediate international protection for the Palestinian people.

The decision of the G8 regarding Israeli aggression in Lebanon and Palestine proves again the clear bias of these countries towards Israel and their unconditional acceptance of Israel's narrative. This demonstrates, again, the need for a political frame that is based on international legitimacy and the United Nations resolutions and within the frame of the United Nations charter.

A just solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict must guarantee the interests of all peoples in the region and must be based on international legitimacy, through which the conflict can be resolved and stabilised. In this respect, an immediate ceasefire is needed, and a halt of aggression in Lebanon and Palestine should be applied. Diplomatic efforts must be given an opportunity to find ways of addressing the real causes of the problem, in order to end the current crisis. The participants in the meeting stressed the need for Palestinian political forces and civil society organizations to formulate a common program that would include the following principles:

1. Ensuring the implementation of the clauses stated in the National Conciliation Document on the need to revitalize the PLO so that it can develop and lead the implementation of a common, agreed-upon resistance strategy against the Israeli occupation.
2. Confronting Israeli aggression and reinforce the spirit of resistance and steadfastness among the Palestinian people in confronting the Israeli occupation and rejecting all unilateral Israeli dictates.
3. Requesting that our partners in Arab civil society organizations increase their effective solidarity with the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples and exert pressure on their respective governments to stop dealing with the state of Israel at all levels.
4. Mobilising solidarity campaigns at the international level and demanding a full boycott, divestment and the imposition of sanctions against Israel, until it fully complies with its obligations under international law by ending its occupation, oppression and racial discrimination.
5. Taking the necessary measures at the Palestinian level to stop all normalization with Israel, particularly any projects between Palestinian and Israeli organizations, unless they are based on a common political stance of rejecting the occupation and recognizing international legitimacy, including the international resolutions pertaining to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.
6. Coordinating the efforts of Palestinian organizations that focus on Israeli violations of international law, with the objective of advocating a boycott against Israel.
7. Calling on the High Contracting Parties of the Fourth Geneva Convention to hold an urgent meeting to discuss practical means of enforcing the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territory.
8. Declaring next Friday, 21 July 2006, a day of solidarity with the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples and to confront Israel's aggression by calling on all civil society organizations in the Arab countries to organize massive marches on that day.
9. Demanding that the PLC drafts a special law on boycotting Israel and approaches international parliaments to push towards imposing sanctions on Israel, due to its flagrant and persistent violations of international law and international humanitarian law.

Civil Society organizations

Occupied Palestinian Territory

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