
Urgent Call for Action Against the Oppression and Starvation of the Palestinian People

International Outcry of Jewish Organizations

In defence of human rights and humanitarian law:

- Prevent Israel's policy of destruction, oppression and collective punishment of the people in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.
- Prevent the government of your country from being complicit in crimes against humanity.
- Call for national and international sanctions against the Israeli Occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as well as for political measures appropriate to force the Israeli government to comply with the standards of international law and human rights.

The Israeli Prime Minister-designate, Ehud Olmert, declared that Israel views the recently elected Palestinian government, led by Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, as a "hostile" counterpart. He therefore intends to cut off ties with the Palestinian Authority as an attempt to prevent Hamas from becoming an established government. Furthermore, he announced **that Israel will refuse to hold official meetings with any public figures from abroad who meet with Hamas officials.**

The situation in Israel and Palestine is changing rapidly and radically. Inasmuch as the international community has complied with the pressure of the United States and Israel to sanction and place embargos on the democratically elected Palestinian government and the Palestinian people we, on the contrary, believe it is high time to impose sanctions against the Israeli Occupation of the Palestinian Territories.

For years, the international community has been witnessing the continuous oppression and dispossession of the Palestinian people. The silence of the world community has made it easy for the State of Israel to pervert the course of international justice and basic human rights. In its attempt to collectively punish the entire Palestinian population for the result of its elections it has not refrained from causing hunger, bombing, and shelling, especially in the Gaza Strip. Blockades of medical supplies, frequent denials of urgent medical care and above all a constant shortage of clean water have caused a critical health situation, nearing catastrophic dimensions. The Israeli army continues, with impunity, to kill, terrify, arrest, and humiliate civilians, among them children and old people. There is no legal justification for the exposure of an entire captive population to such suffering. Israel is perpetrating an unprecedented crime against humanity. To stand by and allow these actions, instead of condemning and halting them, is incontestably immoral. It throws – as any complicity in crimes does – a negative light on all parties involved including those governments that hold the Palestinian people accountable for "good governance".

The silence of the world community has encouraged the State of Israel in its non-compliance with international law. Israel has been conducting a permanent war of attrition against the population of the Occupied Palestinian Territories for decades. Its most transparent and constant goal has been to drive the Palestinians out of their country and to usurp their land. International bodies, and particularly the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, have failed to comply with their legal obligations to prosecute those responsible for such grave violations as the annexation and/or destruction of Palestinian land, water sources, living space and infrastructure. The international community has largely been silent, and therefore compliant in permitting Israel to keep an entire civilian population imprisoned behind a wall of annexation and Jewish settlements. By Israel's constant closures and curfews it has virtually paralyzed the Palestinian economy. It has thus allowed this population to become impoverished and almost completely dependent on international or private charity. Most important, by its silence, the international community has allowed the destruction of Palestinian society itself and this cannot be rectified as long as the Israeli occupation is allowed to continue.

In the light of this, the decision of the United States and the EU to comply with Israel's demands and to impose further pressure on the Palestinians because of the results of their recent democratic elections is inhuman and irresponsible. Any compliance with Israel's demand to cut off all relations with and to isolate the Palestinian Government in order to force new elections to be held, must be seen as a severe offence of civil rights and democracy. Instead of punishing Israel for its ongoing violations of international law, the Palestinian society is being punished for the democratic elections, which were held in adherence with international demands.

Any collaboration in the collective punishment of the Palestinian society is likely to encourage Israel not only to disdain from international human rights and humanitarian law, but to continue to blackmail sovereign nations and arbitrarily impose pressure on the international community.

As a Jewish organisation for a just peace,

We call upon our governments, international organizations and the United Nations, in particular, to refrain from isolating or encouraging the failure of the Palestinian Government.

We call upon our governments to stop supporting the policies of the Israeli Government, which denies the Palestinian people the right of self-determination, and of existence as a sovereign member of the international community.

We call on our governments, international organizations and the United Nations, to make Israel withdraw behind the borders of June 4 1967, in full compliance with international law and countless resolutions passed by the United Nations.

The Government of Israel, by its disregard of basic human rights and international law, is a danger to regional and world peace.