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Palestine

Act now! An Urgent call from Gaza civil society

- News from around the world -

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We Palestinians trapped inside the bloodied and besieged Gaza Strip call on conscientious people all over the world to act, protest and intensify the boycotts, divestments and sanctions against Israel until it ends this murderous attack on our people and is held to account.

With the world turning their backs on us once again, for the last four days we in Gaza have been left to face massacre after massacre. As you read these words, over 120 Palestinians are dead now, including 25 children. Over 1,000 have been injured including countless horrifying injuries that will limit lives forever — more than two thirds of the injured are women and children.

We know for a fact that many more will not make it through the next day. Which of us will be next, as we lie awake from the sound of the carnage in our beds tonight? Will we be the next photo left in an unrecognizable state from Israel's state-of-the-art flesh-tearing, limb-stripping machinery of destruction?

We call for a final end to the crimes and oppression against us. We call for:

• Arms embargos on Israel, sanctions that would cut off the supply of weapons and military aid from Europe and the United States on which Israel depends to commit such war crimes;

• Suspension of all free trade and bilateral agreements with Israel such as the EU-Israel Association agreement;

• Boycott, divestment and sanctions, as called for by the overwhelming majority of Palestinian civil society in 2005

Without pressure and isolation, the Israeli regime has proven time and time again that it will continue such massacres as we see around us now, and continue the decades of systematic ethnic cleansing, military occupation and apartheid policies.

We are writing this on Saturday night, again paralyzed in our homes as the bombs fall on us in Gaza. Who knows when the current attacks will end? For anyone over seven years old, permanently etched on our minds are the rivers of blood that ran through the Gaza streets when for over three weeks in 2009 over 1,400 Palestinians were killed, including over 330 children.

White phosphorous and other chemical weapons were used in civilian areas and contaminating our land with a rise in cancers as a result. More recently 180 more were killed in the week-long attacks in late November 2012.

This time what? 200, 500, 5,000? We ask: how many of our lives are dispensable enough until the world takes action? How much of our blood is sufficient? Before the Israeli bombings, a member of the Israeli Knesset Ayelet Shaked of the far-right Jewish Home party called for genocide of the Palestinian people.

"They should go, as should the physical homes in which they raised the snakes," she said. "Otherwise, more little snakes will be raised there." Right now nothing is beyond the murderous nature of the Israeli State, for we, a population that is mostly children, are all mere snakes to them.

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As said Omar Ghraib in Gaza, "It was heart shattering to see the pictures of little boys and girls viciously killed. Also how an elderly woman was killed while she was having her iftar at Maghreb prayer by bombing her house. She died holding the spoon in her hand, an image that will need a lot of time to leave my head."

Entire houses are being targeted and entire families are being murdered. Early Thursday morning the entire al-Haj family was wiped out – the father Mahmoud, mother Bassema and five children. No warning, a family targeted and removed from life. Thursday night, the same again, no warning, five more dead including four from the Ghannam family, a woman and a seven year old child amongst them.

On Tuesday morning the Kaware family did get a phone call telling them their three-story house would be bombed. The family began to leave when a water tank was struck, but then returned with members of the community, who all came to the house to stand with them, people from all over the neighborhood.

The Israeli jets bombed the building with a roof full of people, knowing full well it was full of civilians. Seven people died immediately, including five children under 13 years old. Twenty-five more were injured, and eight-year-old Seraj Abd al-Aal succumbed to his injuries later that evening.

Perhaps the family was trying to appeal to the Israeli regime's humanity, surely they wouldn't bomb the roof full of people. But as we watch families being torn apart around us, it's clear that Israel's actions have nothing to do with humanity.

Other places hit include a clearly-marked media vehicle, killing the independent journalist Hamed Shehab, injuring eight others, a hit on a Red Crescent rescue vehicle and attacks on hospitals which caused evacuations and more injuries.

This latest session of Israeli barbarity is placed firmly in the context of Israel's inhuman seven-year blockade that has cut off the main life-line of goods and people coming in and out of Gaza, resulting in the severe medical and food shortages being reported by all our hospitals and clinics right now.

Cement to rebuild the thousands of homes destroyed by Israeli attacks had been banned and many injured and ill people are still not being allowed to travel abroad to receive urgent medical treatment which has caused the deaths of over 600 sick patients.

As more news comes in, as Israeli leaders give promises of moving onto a next stage in brutality, we know there are more horrors yet to come. For this we call on you to not turn your backs on us. We call on you to stand up for justice and humanity and demonstrate and support the courageous men, women and children rooted in the Gaza Strip facing the darkest of times ahead. We insist on international action:

• Severance of diplomatic ties with Israel

• Trials for war crimes

• Immediate international protection of the civilians of Gaza

We call on you to join the growing international boycott, divestment and sanction campaign to hold this rogue state to account that is proving once again to be so violent and yet so unchallenged.

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Join the growing critical mass around the world with a commitment to the day when Palestinians do not have to grow up amidst this relentless murder and destruction by the Israeli regime.

When we can move freely, when the siege is lifted, the occupation is over and the world's Palestinian refugees are finally granted justice.

ACT NOW, before it is too late!

Signed by:

Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions

University Teachers' Association in Palestine

Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (Umbrella for 133 orgs)

General Union of Palestinian Women

Medical Democratic Assembly

General Union of Palestine Workers

General Union for Health Services Workers

General Union for Public Services Workers

General Union for Petrochemical and Gas Workers

General Union for Agricultural Workers

Union of Women's Work Committees

Pal-Cinema (Palestine Cinema Forum)

Youth Herak Movement

Union of Women's Struggle Committees

Union of Synergies – Women Unit

Union of Palestinian Women Committees

Women's Studies Society

Working Woman's Society

Press House

Palestinian Students' Campaign for the Academic Boycott of Israel

Gaza BDS Working Group

One Democratic State Group

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