

The Elders urge immediate end to Israel's attacks on Gaza and resumption of ceasefire

20 March 2025

The Elders express alarm at the breakdown of the ceasefire in Gaza, and call for an immediate end to Israel's latest military assault. We urge all parties to demonstrate political will to end the war, and prioritise human life and a pathway to peace over domestic politics. At this dangerous time, we commend the initiative of Arab states to put forward a plan for Gaza's recovery and transition that can pave the way for a credible peace process.

This region-led initiative, supported by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and leading European states, is the most promising way forward. We encourage political leaders from across the world to support this initiative as it develops into a comprehensive plan.

President Trump's recent statement that no Palestinians should be expelled from Gaza is a welcome clarification that mass displacement cannot be part of a solution. We urge him to play a constructive leadership role by supporting the Arab states' plan in the weeks ahead.

We call on all parties to recommit to the next phase of the Gaza ceasefire and prevent any further escalations of violence. It is vital that progress is made towards implementing Phase Two, including the further release of Israeli hostages and arbitrarily-detained Palestinian prisoners, and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.

The Government of Israel must immediately halt its bombardments and lift the unlawful blockade of essential supplies into Gaza. Its decisions to stop all goods and supplies from entering Gaza and cut off electricity are unlawful and inhumane, with life-threatening consequences for civilians, especially children.

These actions are fuelled by the impunity that has underpinned Israel's disproportionate actions across the Occupied Palestinian Territory since the horrific Hamas terror attacks of 7 October 2023. There will be no lasting peace until this impunity ends.

We are truly shocked by the findings of the UN Commission of Inquiry into gender-specific harms and reproductive violations committed by Israeli authorities against Palestinian women

and girls in Gaza. They add weight to the evidence that Israel may be committing acts of genocide, and should be treated with the utmost seriousness by UN member states. Hamas must also be held accountable for the atrocious crimes committed against Israeli civilians on and after 7 October 2023, including any acts of sexual violence.

We are alarmed at the ongoing Israeli annexation of Palestinian territory in the West Bank, which continues apace while many eyes are on Gaza. All states must cease any assistance to or trade with illegal settlements, in line with their international obligations. The Israeli military is using brutal tactics in the West Bank that echo its actions in Gaza, with over 35,000 Palestinians displaced after IDF operations in several refugee camps. These actions are not a proportionate response to any threat to Israeli civilians.

Diplomacy is the only sustainable way forward. The Arab states' plan brings welcome momentum towards a region-led solution. Political leaders must build on this so Palestinians and Israelis can at last enjoy peace, mutual security and self-determination.

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