



Press Release

May 21th, 2021
Canberra, Australia

Ceasefire Announced

The General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific welcomes the announcement of the ceasefire with Israel, brokered by Egypt. However, a ceasefire will not be sustainable until the root causes of the violence are addressed: Israel's ongoing occupation, blockade of Gaza, and abuse of Palestinian human rights.

Israel's latest bombardment is the fourth iteration of this kind of violence against the people of Gaza who have been struggling for 15 years under Israel's severe blockade. This assault killed at least 230 Palestinians, including 65 children, over half of whom were under 10 years old. More than 1,500 homes have been destroyed as well as schools, hospitals, and Gaza's only COVID-19 testing facility. In the midst of a pandemic, 50,000 Palestinians have been displaced.

In a speech addressing the UN General Assembly yesterday, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates for Palestine, Dr Riad Malki, asked what they would do if their land was occupied, their people displaced, besieged, arrested, persecuted, and killed. If Israel, the occupying power, has a right to defend itself, do the Palestinian people suffering under Israel's brutal occupation not have that same right?

Dr Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the UN, wrote in a letter addressed to HE Mr. Zhang Jun, President of the UN Security Council, on Tuesday, "The priority right now must be to stop the killing and destruction. But, calls for a ceasefire that ignore the fact of Israel's impunity and that attempt to return to an unjust and untenable "status quo", whereby Israel is permitted to carry on with its illegal occupation and its persecution and oppression of Palestinians, wherever they may be, are unacceptable and will only consign our people to further oppression, misery and loss."

The General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific urges the international community including Australia and New Zealand to recognise that the Palestinian people have suffered enough. After 27 years of failed bilateral negotiations, there is a clear need for a different approach based on international law that utilises international multilateral organisations such as the International Criminal Court. Practical measures must be taken to ensure protection and equality for the Palestinian people and an end to Israel's continued aggression and human rights abuses, followed by a genuine and just political process. The suffering of the Palestinian people will not end with this ceasefire if the status quo is maintained and Israel is not held accountable for its crimes.

For further information, please contact the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific at Palestinian.Delegation@palgov.org or Tel: (02) 6286 9193.

