

14 December 2023

A Call for an Immediate Humanitarian Ceasefire in Gaza

The Centre for Non-Violence calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

This is a humanitarian disaster of unprecedented magnitude.

The rules of war and International Humanitarian laws must be observed no matter what – even in the absence of reciprocity.

The Australian Government must not support any nation that breaks International Humanitarian laws.

As a not-for-profit organisation working in family violence prevention and crisis support, we hold grave concerns for the safety and wellbeing of all Palestinians in Gaza, and especially for the women and children and diverse communities.

The people of Gaza have been witnessing and experiencing endless violence since the 7 October.

No child in Gaza is safe.

Since this onslaught has begun a new unique acronym has been created to describe what is occurring in the hospitals of Gaza: WCNSF – wounded child, no surviving family. This is an acronym that should never have come into existence. The number of children without any remaining family, some with life changing horrific injuries is in the thousands.

There must be an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.

We are deeply concerned of reports from humanitarian organisations like the International Red Cross and Médecins Sans Frontières of deliberate and concerted attacks on sites of safe haven such as schools, hospitals and mosques. We are also deeply concerned of the reports from Gaza of the Israeli military deliberately targeting clearly marked MSF vehicles.

We also unequivocally condemn the direct targeting on Al Awda Hospital on the 21 November – the last remaining functional hospital in Northern Gaza - one day after the ceasefire ended.

These sites have become the only refuge available for thousands of displaced people, including women and children.

This deliberate targeting of a medical facility is in serious violation of International Humanitarian law.

Nowhere in Gaza is safe.

Our hearts and minds are with the humanitarian workers: the doctors, the nurses, the support staff, working to save the lives of the wounded, while under siege and under fire. It is a losing battle and one they shouldn't have to fight.

The need for medical and essential supplies are urgently needed now.

MSF have reported they are now down to Panadol, ibuprofen and bandages. These do little against injuries sustained by bombs, rockets and bullets. Victims, the vast majority of whom are children, are left with open wounds and have no access to clean water or pain relief.

For the millions of people of Gaza facing these horrors, we see you, we believe you.

We call on the Australian government and the United Nations Security Council to unequivocally condemn these crimes against humanity.

We ask that the Australian government immediately stop supporting Israeli government actions in Gaza by:

- Calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire
- No longer supplying weapons to Israel.
- Support and provide safe passage for humanitarian organisations such as MSF and the International Red Cross to deliver essential humanitarian relief.

It is our determination that one day when a child in Gaza will look to the skies at night, and it will no longer be filled with air-strikes, but instead scattered with the lights of a thousand stars.