

MENA Feminist Taskforce within the Women and Gender Constituency: Statement On Ending Occupation, Apartheid, and Genocide in Palestine

As feminists from the Middle East and North Africa committed to promoting gender equality and human rights in the context of addressing the climate crisis, we condemn in the strongest terms the ongoing genocide, apartheid, and ethnic cleansing of Palestine including a 16-year blockade on Gaza, described by the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres as "[hell on earth](#)" for children and living conditions described as akin to an "open air prison."

We note with deep concern the recent United States veto against a United Nations resolution aimed at securing an immediate ceasefire and providing humanitarian aid in Gaza. The situation demands a global, coordinated response and diplomatic efforts towards facilitating justice, peace, and stability.

In addition to the humanitarian crisis, feminists and gender advocates have long recognized the threat of militarization to human rights and protecting the integrity of the environment. The ongoing bombings destroy hospitals, schools, homes, UN shelters, and other buildings. The presence of unexploded ordnance; the pollution of, and complete shutting down of water supplies; and the use of biological and chemical weapons have grave consequences for current human populations but also for the long-term health of ecosystems and the environment.

Denial of the basic life sustaining necessities of clean water, electricity, housing, fuel, and food, as well as humanitarian aid, violates human rights, potentially constitutes a war crime under international law, and is morally reprehensible. These actions exacerbate the dire humanitarian situation, disproportionately impacting women, children, and marginalized communities. Over 1,000 children have already been killed and medical care is desperately needed for the 50,000 pregnant women in the affected regions, with 5,522 pregnant women expected to give birth in the next month in Gaza.

In light of the above and in solidarity with the people of Palestine and human-rights organizations, and towards this immediate and urgent goal, we stand firm in calling for the following clear and actionable demands:

- **AN IMMEDIATE AND UNCONDITIONAL CEASEFIRE TOGETHER WITH AN END TO GENOCIDE, ETHNIC CLEANSING AND THE MILITARY INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX.**

We call on all Parties to uphold international humanitarian law, international criminal law, human rights standards, and the Geneva Conventions without exception. To this end, we call on the United Nations Security Council to issue an immediate and unconditional ceasefire to end the violence and suffering, including that of Palestinians living under occupation. We further note that those who benefit from the sophisticated and heavily funded machinery making up the military industrial complex are by extension complicit in this suffering, and as such, further call on all Parties to cease the development, transfer, and morally corrupt profiteering of arms that result in genocide and crimes against humanity. The global North's exploitation of war and conflict in the region must end.

- **AN IMMEDIATE END TO THE BLOCKADE ON HUMANITARIAN AID AND ACCESS.**

A blockade is preventing the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza, signaling collective punishment, a war crime under international law. We call for an immediate end to the blockade and unrestricted access to aid, water, electricity, fuel, and food, to Gaza.

- **PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS AND SAFEGUARDING THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN.**

Children are not combatants and should never be civilian casualties. Their safety must be a global priority and as such, Parties must immediately ensure an immediate end to their exposure to violence and death and safeguard human rights in accordance with international standards and the full protection of women and girls, who are disproportionately impacted in times of crisis. We specify the importance of ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, menstrual care, and maternal care.

- **SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE JUSTICE.**

We call for the respect and promotion of the integrity of the environment, the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and a halt to warfare that is rendering spaces uninhabitable. We further call for the preservation, responsible use, sustainable management and equitable distribution of natural resources. Israel must relinquish control over these vital resources, particularly in Gaza, to ensure that communities have the means to sustain their livelihoods and secure their future.

- **INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY AND MEANINGFUL DIPLOMATIC ACTION TOWARDS JUSTICE AND GENUINE PEACE BUILDING EFFORTS.**

We urge member states to take decisive action that centers on human rights promotion and protection and to advance diplomacy towards resolution and long-standing peace, and end to occupation and apartheid. We require that women are actively involved in peacebuilding and decision-making processes to ensure their inclusivity and effectiveness. Further, we call for the International Criminal Court (ICC) to prioritize investigations and commit equal resources to support investigators and independent international monitors to document and collect evidence of war crimes and human rights violations including civilian casualties, the targeting of journalists and medical staff, the use of white phosphorus, and the targeting of essential infrastructure, including hospitals and schools. Finally, we call for accountability and restorative mechanisms to be funded, staffed, and an important aspect of the peace process.

- **UNRESTRICTED ACCESS FOR JOURNALISTS AND AN END TO MISINFORMATION AND CENSORSHIP.**

Parties must provide unrestricted and protected access for international observers and journalists to advance reporting, in ways that are transparent and accountable, without risking targeting or death to ensure the principles of free press and accountability.

We unite across multiple realities to call for an end to colonialism, violence, and ethnic cleansing. We stand firm in calling for an end to the hegemonic discourse that has normalized hate and complicity. We need leadership that is courageous, and accountable across the board. We call on the global community, particularly governments and organizations in the global North, as regions where power is concentrated to heed to the leadership of human-rights centered action in taking forward calls for long lasting peace in the region and throughout the world.

There can be no peace without justice!

There can be no climate justice without human rights!