



Statement by the Australian Friends of Palestine Association on the catastrophe in Gaza

AFOPA calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza to end the humanitarian catastrophe caused by Israel's brutal attack. This attack on Gaza is the 7th in 17 years.

We call for immediate and appropriate levels of aid to the people of Gaza.

This latest attack on Gaza is a result of Israel's repeated refusal to fulfil its commitments under the Oslo Accords of 1993 to withdraw from the Palestinian areas and allow the establishment of a Palestinian state. We reject that a military solution will end the Israel-Palestine conflict. Israel's destruction of Gaza and the mass killing of Palestinian civilians will not bring peace. Palestinian resistance will remain so long as Israeli oppression remains. The occupation must end. The siege on Gaza must end. Israel's system of apartheid must end. The scale of the barbaric killing in Gaza in response to the Hamas attacks cannot be justified as "self-defence" any longer.

We reject the notion that Palestinian resistance to Israel is based on antisemitism rather than the real, observable, and documented cruelties and crimes of the Israeli occupation now 56 years old. We condemn the governments of the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom and other Western powers who now stand by Israel effectively giving it a blank cheque to do whatever it wants in response to the killing of Israeli citizens by Hamas, which we also condemn.

We condemn these governments for protecting and enabling Israel, allowing it to keep building illegal settlements on Palestinian land and operate an apartheid state with impunity. The choice for Palestinians today and in the future is to continue to live under the yoke of a brutal occupation, a system of apartheid, or expulsion from their homelands. We reiterate our support for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which for nearly 20 years has offered a non-violent path towards justice for the Palestinians. BDS is now more important than ever.

We want our leaders to acknowledge in the strongest terms that the killing of Israelis by Hamas on 7 October does not justify the now ceaseless slaughter of Palestinian civilians. We want our leaders to understand that opposing the mass carnage of Palestinians that is occurring in Gaza is as valid as condemning the deaths of Israelis. We want them to understand that calling for an end to the genocide in Gaza is not to condone the attack on Israel. We want them to ask Israel what it will do after Hamas is destroyed, Gaza levelled, and its people killed or expelled. Will Australia and the US call for an end to the conditions that breed the cycle of resistance, terror, and war? Will Israel dismantle its apartheid state? Will it remove its illegal settlements? Will it end the siege of Gaza? Will our leaders work constructively to achieve freedom and self-determination for the Palestinians? The colonisation of Palestine is not an ancient historical event, it is an ongoing everyday vicious reality. Israel keeps expanding illegal settlements, evicting Palestinians from their homes and killing those who resist their dispossession and life under military occupation.

The Hamas attack did not occur in a vacuum. History did not start on 7 October 2023. Unless leaders of the world deal with this conflict in its full historical and political context it will never end, and ordinary people – both Palestinian and Israeli - will continue to suffer and die.

Since Israel commenced its brutal attack on Gaza, immense support for Palestine has arisen around the world. It is incumbent on the governments of all these peoples to act now and bring about a just and lasting peace in Palestine.

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Why Palestine? Because it is a just cause, a noble ideal, a moral quest for equality and human rights. Edward Said

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