

Statement by Principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on the situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory

"We need an immediate humanitarian ceasefire"

5 November 2023

NEW YORK/GENEVA/ROME, 5 November 2023 – For almost a month, the world has been watching the unfolding situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory in shock and horror at the spiralling numbers of lives lost and torn apart.

In Israel, some 1,400 people have been killed and thousands have been injured, according to the Israeli authorities. More than 200 people, including children, have been taken hostage. Rockets continue to traumatize families. Tens of thousands of people have been displaced. This is horrific.

However, the horrific killings of even more civilians in Gaza is an outrage, as is cutting off 2.2 million Palestinians from food, water, medicine, electricity and fuel.

In Gaza, according to the Ministry of Health, nearly 9,500 people have been killed, including 3,900 children and over 2,400 women. More than 23,000 injured people require immediate treatment within overstretched hospitals.

An entire population is besieged and under attack, denied access to the essentials for survival, bombed in their homes, shelters, hospitals and places of worship. This is unacceptable.

More than 100 attacks against health care have been reported.

Scores of aid workers have been killed since October 7 including 88 UNRWA¹ colleagues – the highest number of United Nations fatalities ever recorded in a single conflict.

We renew our plea for the parties to respect all their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law.

We renew our call for the immediate and unconditional release of all civilians held hostage.

¹ The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) fully supports the statement and the call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire by Principals of the IASC.

Civilians and the infrastructure they rely on – including hospitals, shelters and schools – must be protected.

More aid – food, water, medicine and of course fuel – must enter Gaza safely, swiftly and at the scale needed, and must reach people in need, especially women and children, wherever they are.

We need an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. It's been 30 days. Enough is enough. This must stop now.

Signatories:

- Mr. Martin Griffiths, Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs (**OCHA**)
- Ms. Sofia Sprechmann Sineiro, Secretary General, **CARE International**
- Ms. Jane Backhurst, Chair of **ICVA Board** (Christian Aid)
- Mr. Jamie Munn, Executive Director, International Council of Voluntary Agencies (**ICVA**)
- Ms. Anne Goddard, Chief Executive Officer and President a.i., **InterAction**
- Ms. Amy E. Pope, Director General, International Organization for Migration (**IOM**)
- Ms. Tjada D'Oyen McKenna, Chief Executive Officer, **Mercy Corps**
- Mr. Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (**OHCHR**)
- Ms. Janti Soeripto, President and Chief Executive Officer, **Save the Children**
- Ms. Paula Gaviria Betancur, **United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (SR on HR of IDPs)**
- Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (**UNDP**)
- Dr. Natalia Kanem, Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (**UNFPA**)
- Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (**UNHCR**)
- Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlement Programme (**UN-Habitat**)
- Ms. Catherine Russell, Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund (**UNICEF**)
- Ms. Sima Bahous, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, **UN Women**
- Ms. Cindy McCain, Executive Director, World Food Programme (**WFP**)
- Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization (**WHO**)