

Adalah's Statement following the Extreme Violence in Gaza and in Israel since Saturday 7 October 2023

Issued on 11 October 2023

Adalah calls on the international community to intervene immediately to protect the lives of civilians in Gaza, most of whom are Palestinian refugees, who are now subject to Israel's ruthless retaliatory actions. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu clearly declared on 9 October 2023 that Israel "will exact a price that will be remembered by them [Hamas] and Israel's other enemies for decades to come". Yoav Gallant, Israel's Defense Minister, stated that, "We are imposing a complete siege on [Gaza]. No electricity, no food, no water, no fuel – everything is closed." These announcements and the ensuing retaliatory actions indicate the intent to commit war crimes against the civilian population in the Gaza Strip.

These acts, which violate international law, come after the unprecedented, brutal and illegal attack by Hamas militants in Israel against civilians. According to Israeli sources, more than 1,200 people were killed and 2,900 injured, most of whom were civilians, and over 100 individuals (including children, women and the elderly) were taken as hostages into Gaza. While the Palestinian people are entitled to resist the Israeli brutal and prolonged occupation under international law, the killing of civilians, the holding of civilian hostages, and the holding bodies for any political purposes are completely prohibited means and constitute war crimes.

The root causes – the illegal 56-year-old Israeli military occupation, the longest occupation in modern history; the killing of tens of thousands of Palestinians; the blockade on Gaza; Israel's settler-colonial policies in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem; and the denial of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination – as well as the total disregard by the international community of its obligations to fulfil UN resolutions – provide the context to these events.

The extremist, racist Israeli government is using the attacks by Palestinian militants as a pretext to launch illegal attacks and commit war crimes toward ethnic cleansing against the Palestinian people in Gaza. As of 11 October 2023, the death toll in Gaza has risen to 950 people, most of whom are civilians, with over 5,000 individuals injured as a result of the ongoing Israeli attacks, and over 185,000 Palestinians displaced in Gaza. Israeli forces killed an additional 19 Palestinians, including one child, in the West Bank. The dead, wounded and displaced of the last few days join the tens of thousands of Palestinian victims of earlier Israeli military offensives in Gaza, primarily airstrikes. The Israeli military is also striking and destroying infrastructure, including water and sewerage systems, cutting off electricity and humanitarian supplies, and targeting medical facilities and personnel and journalists, creating one of the cruelest humanitarian crises in the world.

We call on the Israeli and Gaza authorities to cease all violations of international humanitarian law and to release all civilian hostages and bodies. We call on the international community to protect the Palestinian people in Gaza from Israel's brutal and illegal actions, to stop the inhumane blockade on Gaza, and to put an end to the Israeli prolonged occupation, in order to uphold Palestinians' right to self-determination.