



MUSLIM SOCIETY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN GAZA/PALESTINE

November 1st, 2023

Given the distressing and escalating humanitarian crisis in Palestine and Israel, we strongly condemn the indiscriminate attacks on innocent civilians. We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to peace, international law, the preservation of life, and the right to self-determination for all peoples.

The 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza are enduring a severe humanitarian catastrophe within a confined enclave, approximately one-fifth the size of Kings County, often referred to as the world's largest open-air prison. It is truly heart-wrenching that, as of the latest count, more than 8,500 Palestinians have tragically lost their lives in Israeli airstrikes, including 3,500 children, with thousands more left injured. Entire families have been annihilated. The looming fear of death now haunts many Palestinians in Gaza to such an extent that some families have resorted to wearing bracelets with their names for identification in the event of a deadly airstrike. Sadly, given the intensity of Israeli indiscriminate bombardments, the number of dead and injured is expected to mount.

Israel intensified the illegal blockade of Gaza. It has cut off water, food, fuel, electricity, telephone and internet service jeopardizing the lives of over two (2) million Gazans. Israeli bombardments have resulted in the destruction of vital infrastructure and of thousands of buildings including mosques, churches, schools, and hospitals. Moreover, more than 1.4 million people in Gaza have been forced to leave their homes, with tens of thousands seeking shelter in U.N. schools and other facilities, following repeated warnings from the Israeli military regarding the risks of remaining in northern Gaza. Israel regards Gazans who do not move south as terrorist partners.

Israel's actions in Gaza have raised concerns over collective punishment, a practice considered a breach of the Geneva Convention and potentially a war crime. These actions can be described as tantamount to a declared genocide.

While the Israeli military maintains its deadly strikes in the Gaza Strip, and as the world's focus remains on Gaza, the West Bank has also witnessed dozens of Palestinian deaths, including children, at the hands of Israeli soldiers and settlers since October 7. Incidents involving Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank, marked by acts of intimidation, threats, land seizures, deadly violence, and the forced displacement of entire village populations, have seen a significant increase. For instance, in Wadi al-Seeq, dozens of settlers, accompanied by Israeli soldiers, forcibly expelled 200 inhabitants from the Bedouin community in less than an hour. Supported by the Israeli army and government, the settlers aim to assert control over land and



grazing areas, all the while impeding Palestinians from living a normal life on their ancestral land. Israeli settlers, with military support, persist in conducting assaults against Palestinians in an attempt to displace them from their homes and land.

At the same time, violence against Palestinian citizens of Israel is on the rise. For instance, a mob assaulted Palestinian students at a university in Netanya, where they were confined to their dorms while hearing chants of “death to Arabs.” A significant number of Palestinian citizens of Israel have been subjected to arrests, detentions, and harassment for expressing solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza, including cases related to their social media engagement.

We express our solidarity with the Palestinian people and strongly condemn Israel's targeted and indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians. We also denounce the violation of human rights of Palestinians and the apartheid-like conditions under which they live, both inside Israel and within the inhumane occupation affecting over two (2) million residents in Gaza and three (3) million in the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, constituting a clear breach of international law.

Neglecting the context of 75 years of Palestinian hardship, at the hand of the Israeli apartheid regime, marked by dehumanization, ethnic cleansing, house and land theft, destruction and demolition of Palestinian homes, robbery, murders, discrimination, and violence not only fails to represent the reality but also lends legitimacy to illegal colonial settlements. Decades of inaction by the world have placed Israel above the law, resulting in untold suffering for the Palestinian people.

Numerous Canadian Palestinians have tragically lost family members and loved ones in the Israeli attacks on Gaza. As members of the Canadian Muslim and Palestinian communities, we carry the profound burden of this war on Gaza. We are profoundly saddened by the tragic loss of life and devastation, and by our government's bias. Violence is unacceptable and must cease. At the same time, we firmly denounce the rise of Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian racism, and anti-Semitism that has emerged in public discourse.

We urge the Canadian government, as well as all faith leaders, organizations, and the global community, to stand for human rights, and to demand an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, an end to the Gaza blockade, a halt on Canadian arms sales to Israel, and the cessation of the occupation of the Palestinian people.