

STATEMENT ON GAZA

Josephite Justice Network - Australia and New Zealand gathered in Sydney March 2024

<https://youtu.be/FhXHUWvOMFY>

The background to the present Israel/Palestine conflict is complex and long-standing. It is enmeshed in age-old oppressions in which both peoples have suffered, and remains expressed in mutual suspicion, revenge, hatred, violence and refusal to recognise the right of the other to exist.

The historical persecutions of the people of Israel remain on the conscience of the world. However, the present situation in Gaza is intolerable, inhumane and self-defeating, and cannot be condoned. It demands a response that is true to humanity.

In Gaza and the West Bank, Palestinian people are suffering in ways that are totally disproportionate to the acts of violence committed by some of their number. The attacks, kidnappings and killing of over one thousand Israeli people on 7 October 2023 have been met with bombing and destruction of civilian infrastructure throughout Gaza, leaving people with no means of escape. Over 30,000 people have been killed, including over 10,000 children, and over 70,000 people have been injured. The mental and physical health effects after months of attacks are severe and increasing. Children are starving to death and famine is facing the whole population.

Such treatment of the Palestinian people is unreasonable. Furthermore, its ferocity may well prove to exacerbate the existing situation. The youth of Palestine and elsewhere may be drawn into the vortex of reciprocal violence in which the Israeli Government has placed itself. An escalation to further extremes is not impossible.

We are deeply concerned that the Australian government's current position on the conflict assists the threat to Palestinian lives, health and future and the continuing destabilisation of the Middle East.

Pope Francis is calling on people of goodwill [to raise their voices for peace](#). He says "Do you really think you are going to build a better world this way? Do you really think you are going to achieve peace? Enough, please! **Let us all say: Stop! Please stop!**"

We acknowledge the efforts already made, such as restoration of the UNWRA funding, and now urge the Australian Government:

1. to speak out strongly against the continual Israeli bombardments and killings, and to agitate for an immediate and lasting ceasefire;
2. [to stop selling armaments to Israel](#);
3. to publicly support the International Court of Justice's ruling that the treatment of the Palestinians is [potentially genocidal](#);
4. to develop policies on the Australian relationship with Israel and Palestine that reflect principles of justice to all;
5. to call for a multinational UN force to ensure peace and security in Gaza and the West Bank;
6. to call for and support a UN led emergency humanitarian program.

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Jan Barnett
Marion Gambin
Megan Li
Kay McPadden
Carmel Hanson
Therese McGarry
Mary MacDonnell
Jo Brady
Rebecca Scanlan
Noelene Quinane
Kath O'Connor

Margaret Robertson
Adrienne Gallie
Violet Cabral
Emilia Nicholas
Jane Woolford
Maria Sullivan
Kenise Neill
Clare Conaglen
Ruby King
Mary Ellen O'Donoghue
Lee Tan
Joelle Sassine
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