



CIDSE STATEMENT ON THE COMMEMORATION OF OCTOBER 7TH

Brussels, 7 October 2024

One year ago, on October 7th 2023, Hamas together with other Palestinian armed groups killed more than 1.200 Israelis and other nationals and injured more than 5.400 during a large-scale attack on Israel. 250 people were taken from their homes and communities as hostages, and 101 are still held in captivity in Gaza of which at least 35 have been declared dead. Today, we commemorate the victims of the attack on October 7th and reiterate our call for a cease-fire and the immediate release of the hostages.

Sadly, we now must also commemorate the almost 42.000 Palestinians who have been killed and more than 95.500 wounded by Israel in Gaza and the West Bank since that day. An immediate end to hostilities and the siege on Gaza is necessary for humanitarian aid and services to reach a population in dire need after a long year of unprecedented and relentless bombing. Over the past year, Gaza has turned into a [graveyard](#) for [children](#). Those surviving face hunger, malnutrition, disease and trauma. The human suffering of civilians in Gaza, including that of the hostages, is unspeakable and needs to end now.

Today, CIDSE calls to break this seemingly endless cycle of violence that preceded October 7th. We urge the international community to intensify efforts to come to political solutions that are long overdue. Sixteen years of blockade of Gaza have led to a man-made humanitarian, social, and economic disaster. Fifty-six years of military occupation, the annexation of Palestinian land, and systemic discrimination have deprived millions of Palestinians of fundamental rights, particularly that of self-determination. Severe violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, such as those we witnessed on October 7th, cannot be used to justify a response that keeps repeating more violations. This is leading us all into a perverse race to the bottom in which human life is reduced to nothing.

Now most urgently, the international community must honor its commitment to international law. Last week [UN experts](#) warned us that international order is “at a knife’s edge” due to a failure to comply and ensure accountability for grave violations. The international community, particularly the EU and the US government, bears significant responsibility for the escalation and catastrophic violence in the region that we have witnessed in the past year. Their selective approach to the enforcement of international law and accountability erodes the rules-based international order. We recognise the dangers this poses and urge respect for the basic principles of international humanitarian law and human rights that bind humanity together in dignity.

The Middle East is rapidly spiraling into a dangerous escalation that will only lead to more loss of human life and destruction. To reverse this, US and EU governments must prioritize accountability, justice, and ensure the protection of fundamental rights and equality of all people. Let every life lost be a reminder of our collective responsibility to seek justice and peace, to stand against violence in all its forms, and to work toward a future where both Israelis and Palestinians can live in safety and under the protection of international law.