

## **Palestine recognition must come with action: to save lives, States must stop Israel's crimes and ensure Palestinian agency**

Statement by independent NGOs and civil society organizations

**Most countries recognize Palestinian statehood, yet Israel's international law violations are accelerating, with near-total impunity, causing mass displacement, widespread death, and an [escalating humanitarian crisis throughout the occupied Palestinian territory](#). For real impact and to avoid complicity, States must turn their expressions of solidarity into concrete, life-saving action, and any plans for a way forward must place Palestinians as the main architects of their own future.**

Statehood recognition is an important, welcome step in the realization of the [Palestinian people's right to self-determination](#). It cannot remain symbolic, or be treated as a reward. Importantly, it doesn't absolve Member States of their legal and moral obligations to put an end to the Israeli occupation in the occupied Palestinian territory (Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem) – which the International Court of Justice has determined to be [illegal](#) and in violation of Palestinians' right to self-determination – and to stop what the UN Commission of Inquiry has determined to be a [genocide carried out by Israel in Gaza](#).

The escalating humanitarian crisis driven by these actions is widely known and [documented](#). Just in the past two years, Israeli eviction orders, demolitions, blockages, arbitrary arrests and direct attacks on people, have triggered the largest forced displacement in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since the start of the occupation in 1967. The [largest land theft in three decades](#) was officially approved last year, and violence by settlers is at an all-time high. In Gaza, Israeli authorities have been carrying out a deadly military operation that has killed or injured over 136,000 people, forced 2 million people to flee several times, and destroyed 90% of the buildings. Throughout Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Israeli forces have attacked health facilities close to 1,650 times. They have restricted free movement – through military checkpoints, gates, barriers, corridors and no-go zones – with devastating consequences on communities' ability to access livelihoods, medical care, education and other vital services.

World leaders cannot claim ignorance. Even as 4 in 5 countries globally recognize the State of Palestine, the Israeli parliament recently approved a [motion to completely annex the West Bank](#) including East Jerusalem, where 3.3 million Palestinians live, and [Israeli officials](#) have reiterated their intention to pursue “complete sovereignty” over the West Bank, stating that “there is no Palestinian people and no Palestinian State” and that “the place belongs to [Israelis]”. Similar intentions have been openly declared [for all of Gaza](#).

Such declarations are no longer fringe: they show what is driving the [accelerated erasure](#) of a people. Israel's fragmentation and annexation of land internationally recognized as Palestinian is rendering the prospect of a viable Palestinian State less and less realistic.

Acting is not optional. The International Court of Justice [clarified](#) in July 2024 that all UN Member States are obligated to not recognize or support Israel's unlawful occupation, including through trade and investments. Moreover, the UN Commission of Inquiry has determined that all States must “take all necessary steps to try to avoid or stop the commission of [genocide](#)”.

Just in the few weeks that have passed since several additional countries recognized the State of Palestine, hundreds of Palestinians have been killed and more than 1,500 have been injured [by Israeli fire](#) across the occupied Palestinian territory. The military takeover of Gaza City has accelerated in scope and brutality: deadly strikes on tents, housing units and public buildings have forced tens of thousands to flee once more, though most people have nowhere to go; [several health care facilities in the north have had to shut down](#) leaving hundreds of thousands with very limited

access to medical care. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, [settler attacks and military incursions and arrests have intensified](#). Dozens of Palestinian structures have been [demolished](#). The Israeli parliament's National Security Committee has advanced discussions to [restrict humanitarian access to prisons](#) where [over 9,500 Palestinians are held](#) as well as a law to authorize the [death penalty](#) for detainees.

With each hour of delay, another family is shattered, another child starves, another home is reduced to dust, another piece of Palestinian life is erased.

To avoid the outcome of having a State of Palestine without Palestinians, and to prevent Israeli forces and settlers from taking additional punitive action against communities, States must use every available political, economic, and legal tool at their disposal for:

- An immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, and for Palestinians to own and lead their own (re)construction plans and process, in line with their inalienable right to self-determination
- An end to Israel's illegal occupation of the entire occupied Palestinian territory, ensuring the conditions needed for Palestinians to stay in their land
- Unrestricted UN-coordinated humanitarian access and protection, as enshrined in international humanitarian law, throughout the occupied Palestinian territory
- An end to trade with illegal settlements, including the provision of services and investments
- An immediate halt to all arms sales and transfers to Israel
- Accountability for crimes committed
- The immediate reopening of a corridor linking Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, for medical evacuations and other purposes

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**Endorsed by (alphabetical order):**

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| 1. ActionAid International   | 12. Insecurity Insight                                |
| 2. Al Awda Health and Community Association                              | 13. Médecins du Monde International Network (MdM)     |
| 3. American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)                             | 14. Norwegian People's Aid                            |
| 4. Arab Educational Institute - Pax Christi Palestine                    | 15. Oxfam International                               |
| 5. Bystanders No More  | 16. PARC - Agricultural Development Association       |
| 6. Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP)                                 | 17. Pax Christi International                         |
| 7. CIDSE - International Family of Catholic Social Justice Organisations | 18. Palestinian Institute for Climate Strategy (PICS) |
| 8. Emmaus International  | 19. Plateforme des ONG françaises pour la Palestine   |
| 9. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect                       | 20. Sabeel-Kairos UK                                  |
| 10. Global Legal Action Network (GLAN)                                   | 21. The Middle East Children's Alliance               |
| 11. HelpAge International  | 22. Terre des Hommes Italy                            |
|  | 23. United Against Inhumanity                         |

**NOTE TO EDITORS**

- In 2025, Israeli [policies and practices](#) have forced at least [40,000 Palestinians out of their homes in the northern West Bank](#) – all-time high since Israeli occupation began in 1967 – due to Israeli-ordered demolitions, evictions, and increasing [attacks by settlers](#) and armed forces. Another 66,800 at least face a direct risk of forcible transfer, as about 663 km<sup>2</sup> of West Bank land is vulnerable to settlement takeover and expansion.
- Israeli authorities have approved the [largest land theft in the West Bank](#) in three decades in July 2024, as well as the construction of [over 15,000 units and 22 new illegal settlements](#) in 2025 alone, and [established over 121 new outposts](#). Weeks ago, Israeli authorities gave final approval for the “E1” settlement project, which is effectively cutting off East Jerusalem from the occupied West Bank and further fragmenting the land.
- For two years, Israeli forces have bombed Gaza relentlessly. The military operation has [killed at least 66,000, injured 170,000 and forced close to 2 million people](#) to flee repeatedly. Over [92% of housing units](#) and [90% of school buildings](#) are now destroyed and [only 1.5% of cropland](#) is now usable as a result.

- Since 2007, Israeli authorities have blocked the entry of vital goods into Gaza, including an 11-week complete siege this year that has led to [extreme starvation, with famine confirmed](#) in northern Gaza, and severe shortages in health facilities.
- Israeli forces have [attacked health care facilities close to 1,650 times](#) across the occupied Palestinian territory since October 2023.
- Israeli authorities have imposed countless movement restrictions across the occupied Palestinian territory in the form of [militarized corridors, checkpoints and no-go zones](#) in Gaza (82% of the land is now inaccessible), and over [800 gates, checkpoints and barriers](#) in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with devastating consequences on people's ability to access livelihoods, health care, education and other vital services.