

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Ligue Internationale de Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté

Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad

Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO; Special Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO, and UNICEF.



Open Letter to the UN Security Council on the situation in Gaza **Women's International League for Peace and Freedom calls for the urgent end to violence and inclusive peace** **July 2014**

Dear United Nations Security Council,

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the longest serving women's peace organization in the world, demands an end to the violence and lethal attacks in Gaza and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and advocates for the protection of civilians, gender-sensitive processes and women's meaningful participation.

The besiegement of the Palestinian people in Gaza, the devastating bombings, and the illegal ground operation amounts to crimes of aggression, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide. The occupying power, Israel, is inhumanly attacking, killing and displacing civilians. Death tolls continue to rise with nearly five hundred women, men and children in Gaza killed in this latest military operation, of which more than 80 percent are civilians. This is simply outrageous. There are over 100,000 displaced persons and 1.2 million people with no or very limited access to water or sanitation services, according to UN reports.

The Security Council and international community must act urgently to prevent further violence, and prevent further violations of international humanitarian law and human rights; taking into account that the impact of the violence is gendered and has a significant and differing impact on women.

WILPF calls on the Security Council and international community to ensure:

- Immediate cessation of all violence and military activity by Israel in Gaza, and the negotiation and maintenance of a comprehensive ceasefire.
- Immediate imposition of a comprehensive arms embargo on all parties to the conflict.
- Urgent increase in gender-sensitive humanitarian access, aid and services.
- Meaningful inclusion of women, women's rights and gender perspectives in all aspects of decision-making related to the current crisis, potential negotiations and ceasefires, and the ongoing peace and security processes in the region as laid out in United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent related resolution on women, peace and security.
- All perpetrators and violators are held accountable for all violations and crimes committed in accordance with international law.
- Nonviolent process to demilitarize the region including ending the blockade and occupation, and protecting, fulfilling and realizing all rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination.

A failure to act will result in the continued murder of innocent civilians, which in turn directly undermines the maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council members must be prohibited from using the veto to block action in situations of "atrocities crimes", and the international community must continue efforts in all forums including before the General Assembly by invoking United Nations General Assembly "Uniting for Peace" 377A resolution.

We reiterate that immediate steps need to be taken to stop the killings, and ease the appalling conditions of civilians in occupied Gaza and to start to move towards implementing longer-term inclusive peace.

Sincerely,

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