

CEASEFIRE NOW! END THE OCCUPATION!

STATEMENT FROM JEWISH COLLECTIVES

We are Jewish groups living on unceded Aboriginal lands. Our message is unified and unequivocal: we call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and unconditional release of humanitarian aid.

For weeks we've watched with horror and helplessness as news from Gaza becomes more dire by the minute. Many of us have Israeli and/or Palestinian family and friends, and we are deeply worried at Israel's escalation of violence.

At the point of writing, the UN estimates that the death toll in Gaza exceeds 7,000 people, but the number of people lost continues to rise. According to the Israeli government's own reports, only a few of those killed (estimates of 18) have been Hamas officials.

For the past 15 years Gaza has been under Israeli siege with an air, sea and land blockade, such that the conditions have caused it to be described as the world's largest open-air prison. Israel's ongoing siege of Gaza must end. Most young people in Gaza have never been able to leave. In the past 18 days, more people have been killed by Israel's military actions in Gaza than in the past 15 years combined. These are horrifying statistics. Gaza is becoming a graveyard for a population that has nowhere else to go. Meanwhile, attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank and Jerusalem by Israel's military and settler militias are surging.

There are about 1.4 million* internally displaced people – most of whom were already stateless refugees – sheltering in United Nations Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA) shelters in Gaza, which Israel bombs – breaching international law. At the same time, Israel bombs homes, hospitals, schools, bakeries, journalists, and convoys of refugees fleeing to areas where Israel told them they would be safe. It bombs entire apartment buildings and devastates whole family lines. Electricity, water, food, and other supplies have been cut off; those hospitals still operating have no anaesthetic and are using vinegar and cleaning fluid to clean people's wounds. Over 100 neonates depend on electricity that may fail at any given moment, and thousands of pregnant women have nowhere safe to give birth. At time of writing, we are receiving reports that Israel has completely cut electricity, phone, and internet services in Gaza.

There is no safe place to hide in Gaza.

The horrific violence that Hamas inflicted in Israel on October 7 does not justify Israel's actions. To be clear: while the Israeli government recently declared war in Gaza, its war on Palestinians started over 75 years ago. To this end, any ceasefire must be followed by an end to Israel's occupation of Palestinian land. This is the only way forward, the only way out of the violence that has been ongoing for nearly a century.

We are outraged at the Australian Government's inaction on Israel's assault in Gaza and alarmed by its declaration of support for Israel, including military deployment. We are watching genocide unfold before our eyes. This is not hyperbole. Nearly 800 scholars and practitioners of international law, conflict studies and genocide studies published an [open letter](#) that underscores the gravity of the situation in Gaza.

*An earlier version of this statement referred to outdated numbers of internally displaced people.

We often use ‘Never Again!’ in reference to the Holocaust, yet these words mean nothing if we stand back and take no action in the face of Israel’s attacks on Palestinians. Shame on politicians who use Israel’s war to bolster their own political stance instead of calling out the atrocities taking place!

Our Jewishness ranges in its content and practice. But we all agree that core principles of Judaism are those of Tzedek (righteousness), Tikkun Olam (repair of the world), and Ve’ahavta (love your fellow as yourself). For some of us, our principles emerge from a will to honour the memory of family members murdered in the Holocaust, and ancestors who suffered through centuries of antisemitic violence and oppression. Jews are not a monolith, and we are not represented by Israel or Zionism. We stand united in our calls for peace and solidarity with Palestinians who deserve liberation from the Israeli settler-colonial occupation and the violence it inflicts. We stand against the occupation and demand an end to the war. We cry out in horror at what is being done to Palestinians with the world’s permission, assistance, and funding.

We know that all life is sacred. This war cannot be allowed to go on. We stand in solidarity with Palestinians and their demand for justice, and call for justice for all oppressed and colonised people.

We are not free until all are free.

We call for the following:

1. Ceasefire now!
2. End Israel’s Occupation of Palestinian land
3. End the Australian Government’s support for Israel’s war

Signatories

