

CPDE Statement on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

8 August 2014

As a community of civil society organizations from around the world, the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) upholds the defence of human rights and the protection of human life as enshrined by international law. Central to CPDE's mandate is a commitment to peace *realised through social justice*, as established by the Istanbul Principles; essential in our pursuit of development effectiveness, therefore, is an enabling environment that puts primacy on the respect for human rights¹. This is especially true in the context of the post-2015 agenda, which promotes peace and security and the resolution of conflicts as preconditions for development.

What is taking place in Gaza goes against the principles that CPDE stands for. Since Israel's attacks on Gaza began in early July close to two thousand Palestinian civilians have died, and thousands more injured including women and children². Public infrastructure and basic social services have been decimated, including UNRWA³ and other schools, mosques medical facilities and refugee camps. The conflict has displaced close to half a million Palestinians and today some 1.5 million people are in dire need of electricity, food, medicines and clean drinking water.

The situation on the ground has become a humanitarian tragedy. Last month, a resolution⁴ adopted by the UN Human Rights Council to launch an independent inquiry into purported violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws called on both sides to agree to an immediate ceasefire, for Israel to lift the blockade on Gaza, and for the international community to provide urgently needed humanitarian assistance and services to the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. It is also critical that human rights observers and humanitarian workers have secure access to the Gaza strip, as a step to ensure accountability and prosecution for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Both Israelis and Palestinians deserve a life free from war and strife.

We urge the international community to act to end this bloodshed, and to work for a permanent peace in the region based on the principles of social justice, human rights, international law and the right to self determination of the Palestinian people.

We denounce Israel's attacks on Gaza, which are entirely disproportionate to the threat posed to Israel and severely affects Palestinian civilians, the chief victims of these indiscriminate military assaults.

We endorse the call to end the blockade of Gaza which has prevented access to basic aid for civilians throughout the conflict, stifled economic development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), and systematically marginalised an entire people – factors that have led to the latest flare-up of tensions. This conflict is but an expression of the dispossession of the lands and resources of the Palestinian people, who have suffered for decades under Israeli occupation, and the denial of their right to self determination.

We believe only an immediate end to Israel's assaults, a withdrawal of its troops from the OPT and a commitment by all actors to negotiations for a lasting peace between Israel and Palestine can address the root causes of a conflict that has dragged on for over 60 years. Such an agreement must put an end to the culture of impunity that has fuelled a cycle of violence, mutual hate and discrimination on both sides of the Israel-Palestinian divide.

¹ In June last year, a coalition of Palestinian civil society organisations (PNGO) in Gaza hosted the sub-regional preparatory meeting on CSO effectiveness; 17 CSO representatives from the region participated to express solidarity with their besieged colleagues in Gaza and to underscore the negative impacts that conflicts, foreign occupation and the negation of the right to self-determination have on development

² UNOCHA OPT

³ United Nations Relief and Works Agency < <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/03/israel-air-strike-un-school-gaza-rafah>>

⁴ See: <<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48330#.U9ZVeFa8CTU>>

The crisis in Palestine demands that all actors address the real drivers of conflict and its impact on development, and promote an environment whereby peace and security is ensured, and violent conflict prevented. As development actors civil society can have a powerful impact on the possibility of reaching a viable peace settlement in Palestine. Such a peace must include measures to ensure accountability for all war crimes that have been committed in the context of this conflict and for gross violations of international humanitarian law.

In the interim, adequate means of redress and rehabilitation must be secured for all victims of this conflict. We urge all development actors to take action, ensuring that humanitarian and long-term development assistance reaches all victims.

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