

## **Stop the war crimes against the Palestinian people in Gaza**

The Arab Association for Human Rights strongly condemns the continued Israeli offensive in Gaza during the past few days, which has led to the death of more than 300 and the wounding of more than 900 Palestinians, including hundreds of civilians; women and children, as well as civilian police and security services.

While, the Arab Association for Human Rights expresses its condemnation of all violations of human rights associated with this unlawful bombardment, it confirms that the use of warplanes and destructive missiles to shell civilian population centers is a violation of all international laws and treaties, regardless of the Israeli justifications of the firing of Qassam rockets on Israel, which does not constitute, in any event, justification for the crimes committed by the occupation forces in all the civilian-inhabited regions in the Gaza Strip. Nor does it justify the aggression against civilians and the targeting of places of worship, educational institutions and other civilian facilities. The large number of dead and wounded and the timing of the bombardment clearly indicate that civilian and police sites were targeted with the aim of inflicting the largest number of casualties; this is a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention under Article 147 and therefore, a War Crime.

The ongoing siege of the Gaza Strip and the continuing offensive and destruction of civilian facilities (including places of worship, educational and health institutions), constitutes another crime and collective punishment against more than one and a half million civilians who are living in an atmosphere of continued terror and intimidation. In addition, this siege prevents the arrival of essential civilian provisions, particularly medical supplies, and complicates the transportation of the casualties for treatment outside the targeted areas.

The Arab Association for Human Rights strongly condemns the continuation of such atrocious crimes against humanity, as well as the world silence towards what is happening in Gaza. This is particularly evident at the official level, which has failed to act in spite of repeated calls in the past several months. This silence was tantamount to a green light for Israel to escalate its siege, topped with the barbaric bombardment of the Gaza Strip and its people.

The Security Council's non-binding statement is evidence of the incompetence of the United Nations in implementing its primary duty in maintaining world peace and security.

In addition, the political movements on the European stage indicate the failure of the European Union to do its part and fulfill its conventions with the countries of the region. The Arab Association would like, in particular, to bring to mind the decision of the European Council at the beginning of this month, to upgrade the European Union's relations with Israel, without any actual review or minimum interest in Israel's record that is rich with human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territories, noting that this decision was taken while the Israeli Government was preparing for this bombardment and crimes!!

The Arab Association for Human Rights urges the international community, on both the official and popular levels, to move immediately to take steps to stop the bombardment and the Israeli killings and destruction of the Gaza Strip and in particular:

1. Calls upon all countries of the world to hold an emergency session of the Security Council to take practical steps to stop the Israeli aggression against the civilians in the Gaza Strip, and to send an official mission to investigate Israel's crimes against the Palestinian civilians in Gaza and bring those responsible for these crimes to justice in international courts, particularly for war crimes.
2. Invites the High Contracting Parties of the Geneva Conventions to fulfill their legal obligations (under common Article 1) to ensure the effective implementation of the provisions of the Conventions, and adopt concrete measures in order to ensure Israel's fulfilment of its obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular with regard to the protection of civilians in combat zones.
3. Calls on the European Union to break their silence, and take measures in order to oblige Israel to comply with human rights treaties and humanitarian international law, including the adoption of immediate restrictive measures and sanctions, as well as cessation of all upgrade dialogue with Israel.
4. Calls upon all international civil and grassroots institutions to intensify their work in the field to oblige the international institutions and governments of the world to break their silence, which provides a comfortable atmosphere for Israel to continue its aggression and crimes against the Palestinian people, and for the need for action to end the siege and open the crossings (particularly the Rafah crossing) in order to bring medical and humanitarian aid to our people in the Gaza Strip.