



International Network for Economic, Social & Cultural Rights
Red Internacional para los Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales
Réseau international pour les droits économiques, sociaux et culturels

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Ehud Olmert
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Amir Peretz
Minister of Defense
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21 July 2006

Dear Prime Minister and Minister of Defense:

We are deeply concerned about recent reports of violations of the human rights of the Palestinian population. We call on the Government of Israel to halt its disproportionate military action in order to prevent further violations associated with the deepening humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and, together with all actors involved in the current conflict, to observe and respect international law, including the fundamental rights and obligations set out in international humanitarian and human rights law.

Since the start of the new crisis on 25 June, we are gravely concerned about information received from multilateral and civil society organizations in the region which indicates disproportionate military attacks by the Israeli forces, which have led to the deaths of dozens of civilians and the injury of many more in the Gaza Strip. In addition, we are deeply troubled by information on the targeting of vital civilian infrastructure, including electricity, water, bridges and educational institutions, as well as the closing of crossing points, which are essential to the delivery of food, medical supplies, fuel, and humanitarian assistance, as well as the movement of civilians. Current military actions have disastrous consequences on the economic sector in Gaza, undermining the progressive realization of economic rights and further exacerbating the high unemployment and poverty rates among the already impoverished population. We also raise concern about information that shows collective punishment in the form of sonic booms, which have the sole effect of harming and indiscriminately traumatizing the entire population, especially young children.

Again, we call on your administration to respect international law and particularly to comply with its obligations under human rights and humanitarian law. We note Israel's ratification of and obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Similarly, in recognition of extensive obligations under humanitarian law, we call for the Government of Israel to respect the life, well-being, and property of civilians, as well as the principle of proportionality in order to prevent unnecessary suffering of civilians.

Sincerely,

Members of the International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:

- Organization or Individual Name, Country
- Organization or Individual Name, Country

CC:

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