

Gaza: A Ceasefire Agreement must be Based on International Law, respect for Human Rights

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Gaza Ministry of Health

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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Press Release

Gaza Ministry of Health, Palestine

The Ministry of Health Gaza insists that any ceasefire agreement must guarantee the human rights of our people, most importantly, the right to health.

We therefore stress that any agreement arising out of the talks in Cairo must be based on international law, not self-interest.

We emphasise that international law is something that is applied without fear or favour, not negotiated.

The right of our people to health is a right that is interdependent with, and indivisible from, every other universal human right, as enshrined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) and reasserted in the *Vienna Declaration*.

The devastation wreaked by the Israeli war criminals in Gaza, the widespread destruction of the most basic human needs such as water and shelter, the attacks on our hospitals, clinics and ambulances, the death and injury of scores of our health workers, the senseless annihilation of our electricity and sanitation infrastructure, our places of worship and our schools leave us confronting the challenge of preventing ill-health, promoting well-being and providing health services in circumstances in which even the barest essentials are absent.

The right to health is indivisible from the right to housing, the right to employment, the right to freedom of movement, the right to freedom of political and religious belief, the right to self-determination – and most importantly, the right to freedom from occupation.

These are rights guaranteed under international law – they require only that the law be applied.

They are NOT NEGOTIABLE.

The Ministry of Health Gaza views with incredulity the [statement](#) from Ban Ki-moon and US Secretary of State John Kerry counting on “...a continued collaborative international effort to assist Egypt and the parties reach a durable ceasefire as soon as possible.”

The international community has had 47 years to “assist the parties to reach a durable ceasefire,” through implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242.

The international community has had four years since the siege of Gaza was [declared](#) illegal by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay to “assist the parties to reach a durable ceasefire.”

There is no absence of support in international law either for the conditions, or the legal basis, that would ensure a durable ceasefire.

There is merely an absence of real commitment by both the United Nations and the United States to enforce one that is based on, and accords with, international law.

The Ministry of Health Gaza considers that the process currently underway in Cairo is best served by considering the issues within the framework of legitimacy, rather than hypocritical platitudes about peace processes with no basis in either law or justice – peace processes that have, and will continue to, perpetuate abuses of, not promote, Palestinians’ enjoyment of human rights.

Either the rule of law is applied without fear or favour, or the United Nations, its instruments and its organisations, risk becoming not only an irrelevance, but complicit in the abuses of the very rights they purport to uphold.

We ask – no, we demand – that the international community shoulder its responsibilities to the Palestinian people, in Gaza and elsewhere, and insist on the implementation of international law.

We demand that 47 years of stalling, hedging, filibustering and prevaricating end, and end now.

We demand the international community support our just demands for an end of the illegal Israeli occupation that breaches our right to our own territory and our right to self-determination, and an end to the illegal siege of Gaza that breaches our right to freedom of movement and to development.

We demand that any agreement coming out of Cairo guarantees Palestinians in Gaza – and everywhere – the enjoyment of our right to life and to health, rights which are indivisible from and interdependent with all human rights.

Anything less is not only a threat to a durable and just ceasefire in Gaza, but also a threat to the rights of all people, everywhere.

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