

The Genocide in Gaza: Statement by Sweden's Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research

By [Transnational Foundation](#) and [Jan Oberg](#)
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[As the brutal slaughtering in Gaza](#) unfolds in [increasingly horrific proportions](#), we, as an experienced research foundation for peaceful conflict resolution and peace-making since 1986, feel the urge to contribute our analytical points, sentiments and constructive conflict-resolution ideas.

TFF also wants to be on record with this Statement so that when historians look back on this moral calamity, they will see who stood with whom and who advocated peace instead of ongoing genocide.

The killing has to stop, and we call, together with the UN and so many others, for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire.

The horrific attack of Hamas on October 7, 2023, with the death of over 1100 people, is indefensible. There is no excuse for the killing of absolutely innocent people. While there is a painful history of 75 years of brutal occupation and apartheid regime against the Palestinian people, there is no justification for such an act of senseless violence.

However, Israel's response can by no means be seen as practising the right to self-defence. It is an utterly out-of-proportion massacre of civilians, mainly women and children, executed by the military of the most totalitarian and racist government Israel ever had since it was established. It is an unprecedented murderous revenge. [It is genocide](#).

[Despite the strongest condemnation by the UN](#), despite the unprecedented calls of its [Secretary General](#), Israel continues with its systematic high-tech slaughter, and the Western governments are standing silent or, like Germany, declare their "unwavering support for

Israel." EU leaders declared immediately that 'Europe' is "standing with Israel." The US voted against a ceasefire.

[It is heartbreaking and painful beyond words](#) to helplessly watch the unfolding of this massacre.

After two months, these are the facts:

- [7,900 children](#) bombed to pieces, [hundreds of them](#) trapped under the debris, thousands of children mutilated, [a whole young generation traumatised](#) forever.
- [17,500 dead](#). Crying doctors in [utterly dysfunctional hospitals](#), operating without anaesthetics.
- The homes of tens of thousands of people in shambles, [24 of 36 hospitals](#), schools, mosques, libraries, the beautiful university of Gaza – destroyed, erased to the ground.
- [1.9 million out of 2.2 million people forced](#) out of their homes into the streets, deliberately starved of food, water and medical help, trapped under more and more bombing without any possibility to escape – it is a war crime of monstrous proportions.
- [More than 100 UN staff members and over 60 journalists and media people](#) have been killed, 54 of them Palestinians.

But while much of Israel and many of the Western governments seem to be blinded by the idea of eternal victimhood of Jews and Israel, that can't be used as an equally eternal excuse for just every atrocity. Fortunately, hundreds of thousands of Jews in and outside Israel show in unequivocal terms, that this is not happening in their name.

[Hundreds of Jews with kippas](#) packed New York Central Station as early as three weeks after the beginning of the forced exodus of 1 million Palestinians and the following slaughtering and blocked the whole station for hours, all of them in black t-shirts with huge letters "This Jew is for immediate ceasefire". And they keep protesting.

[35 Jewish-Palestinian organisations in Israel](#) are calling for an unconditional ceasefire, and the International Jewish Voice for Peace is raising its voices everywhere around the globe.

[Hundreds of Rabbis all around the world](#), including in Israel, have been condemning the unparalleled killing and are calling for an immediate ceasefire.

Little do you read in the Western mainstream media about this, nor about the millions of other people around the world who manifest their solidarity with the Palestinian people.

[Amnesty International condemned Israel](#) in non-mistakable terms, and the [Security Council](#) nearly unanimously called for an immediate ceasefire – vetoed shamefully by the United States alone.

[The WHO called out Israel](#) and urged for an immediate ceasefire.

[Meanwhile, Prime Minister Netanyahu repeatedly states](#) that he will not be moved: the "war on Hamas" (the Western media's deceptive narrative for the genocide) will continue. Palestine did not exist on the map of the New Middle East [he showed at the UN](#).

Netanyahu brandishes map of Israel that includes West Bank and Gaza at UN speech

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Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu uses a red marker on a map of 'The New Middle East' as he addresses the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, September 22, 2023. (AP/Richard Drew)

By all means available, this Israeli government should be isolated until it stops the genocide. Its political and military leaders must be held accountable for the horrible crimes against humanity and be brought to justice. What is at stake is the strength of international law, several conventions and UN Charter norms.

Every country that has delivered and continues to deliver the military means enabling this immoral, illegal and barbaric policy must be seen as complicit and likewise be held accountable. Without the ongoing military and political support of the US and Western States, Germany in particular – [that 10-folded its weapon deliveries since October 23](#) – this horrible war and the unlawful occupation would be over soon.

There is no doubt that this will backfire on Israel and the West.

The whole world is watching the slaughtering and the collaboration of the Western states with horror and disgust. The arrogance of the "leading nations" and their claim to act in the name of democracy, freedom, and human rights – as well as their 'rules-based international order' – is fast falling apart.

How Can We Move Towards Long-term Peace?

- We still believe that Jews and Palestinians can live together – and so do many of them themselves. Even under shocking conditions, people and organisations on both sides still insist that their lives are inextricably linked and that peaceful coexistence is possible.

It will be a long and painful path to make this happen – and it will only be possible with equal rights for all.

And it will need tremendous pressure from the outside and a non-violent revolution from the inside to change Israel into a just, human rights and law- respecting true democracy.

- We need to look at the entire Middle East as a region – we need its dense network of economic, cultural, and political ties to set up an all-regional conflict-resolution mechanism á la the OSCE. This way, over several years, all parties can dialogue their way through to something they can live with in the long term.

There are many possible elements – tie peace into economic and political mechanisms and relations; think of cantons and autonomies; think of mutually beneficial/cooperative uses of territories; think of the relations of it all with the Rest of the World, including the Global South. Tie it in with China's Belt and Road Initiative, BRI.

Warfare requires no intellect or creativity; peace-making requires both.

- The violence must die down to move towards such a civilised process. We need an immediate ceasefire.

Ideally, we need a huge UN mission to disarm Israel and Hamas to such a level that neither can re-start a war. And then all the good offices around the world, governmental but certainly more so non-governmental, to help mediate, consult, dialogue every detail: What do the many parties fear and what do they want?

And then – at the end, after years of such a peace-building process – the parties would come to a final negotiation table and then sign an agreement of peaceful coexistence with all its civilian and military modalities.

- Conflict resolution means solving problems that stand between the parties. It cannot succeed by violence, looking to the past, or tit-for-tat for what was done yesterday.

It is, instead, one big, complex and long peace workshop where better futures/visions/scenarios are brought up, evaluated, and sorted out – ending in combining the best elements into a comprehensive future arrangement.

You can't change the past, but you can change the future. And – no! – everybody will not be happy, but all can be happy with something – and see a better future for their children.

And this is also where truth and reconciliation commissions come in – the healing and forgiveness that is found in all religions.

Peace *is* still possible.

Signed by TFF Associates:

Christina Spännar – PhD in sociology, founder, Sweden.

Jan Oberg – PhD in sociology, founder and director, Sweden.

Annette Schiffmann – Veteran peace activist & organiser of numerous international conferences on alternatives to war and violence: Iraq, Death Penalty, Israel/Palestine, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Heidelberg, Germany.

David Swanson – Co-Founder, Executive Director, and a Board Member of World Beyond War, author, activist, journalist, and radio host, the United States.

Liu Jian – Co-founder of Ichi Foundation, Beijing, China.

Erni Friholt – Secretary, the Orust Peace Movement, Orust, Sweden.

Claus Kold – PhD, senior researcher, director of TurningPoints, Denmark.

Biljana Vanskovska – Professor, Head of the Global Changes Center, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje, Macedonia.

Farhang Jahanpour – Retired professor and Editor for Middle East and North Africa at BBC Monitoring, England.

Radmila Nakarada – Professor, Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade, Distinguished Fellow, New South Institute, Johannesburg, Belgrade, Serbia.

Ola Friholt – Chairman, the Orust Peace Movement, Orust, Sweden.

Richard Falk – Professor Emeritus, Princeton University, public intellectual and former UN Rapporteur for the Occupied Territories, US/Turkey.

Elaheh Pooyandeh – MA in peace studies, peace educator and mediator, Tehran, Iran.

Ina Curic – Sociologist, M.A. in Gender Studies as well as Peace and Conflict Studies; former TFF project coordinator in Burundi, creator of Imagine Creatively story-telling for peace, Romania.

David Loy – Retired professor of Buddhist and comparative philosophy, writer, and Zen teacher in the Sanbo Zen tradition of Japanese Zen Buddhism.

Chantal Mutamuriza – Former TFF project coordinator in Burundi, human rights advocate and humanitarian worker, Switzerland and Ethiopia.

Chaiwat Satha-Anand – Professor emeritus, Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University and prolific writer on Islam and nonviolence, Bangkok, Thailand.

Brajna Greenhalgh – PhD Researcher; MSc in psychology, licensed counsellor, Bangor University, Wales.

Mairead Maguire – Nobel peace laureate, co-founder of Peace People, Northern Ireland, Kilcief County Down.

Gareth Porter – historian, independent investigative journalist, author and policy analyst specializing in U.S. national security issues, the United States.

Shastri Ramachandaran – Independent Journalist, editor, writer, publication & media consultant, New Delhi, India.

Peter Peverelli – Retired professor, School of Business and Economics, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam and lifelong expert on China, The Netherlands.

Neelakanta Radhakrishnan – Dr., The Gandhi Peace Mission, India; former Director of Gandhi Darshan and International Centre of Gandhian Studies in New Delhi, India.

Jorgen Johansen – Editor at Irene Publishing, independent peace researcher and writer, Sweden.

Majken Sorensen – Associate Professor of Social Science at Østfold University College and Karlstad University, Sweden.

Jake Lynch – Associate Professor in the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney, Australia. He also writes, reports and broadcasts regularly as a journalist working in peace journalism, as well as making documentary films.

Fredrik S. Heffermehl – Lawyer (Oslo and NYU) and author, world expert on the Nobel Peace Prize. Just published *The Real Nobel Peace Prize*, a study of Alfred Nobel's vision of peace by disarmament that also presents the 115 persons who should have won the Prize had Nobe's intention been respected, Norway.

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Appendix: Why we use the word "genocide."

The use of the word 'genocide' is controversial in many circles and may evoke emotional reactions. We are also aware that it has been used by some for political purposes to denigrate some other country or people.

But we do not use the term lightly or for political purposes. Given the links we provide below to trustworthy sites and organisations, legal documents such as the Genocide Convention, as well as expert opinion, we believe this is the term that best summarises what has unfolded in Gaza and subjected the Palestinians to unspeakable, unprecedented suffering as a people.

One central criterion is *intentionality* – that there is a deliberate intention to harm, eradicate, humiliate, displace or make life impossible for a nation – in part or, over time, in whole.

Most of the links provided by professor [John Mearsheimer here](#), in which various Israeli leaders are on

record, make it abundantly clear that the suffering cannot be explained merely by 'collateral damage,' i.e. civilian casualties caused by unintended consequences of bombings and other warfare activities.

Furthermore, according to the Genocide Convention of 1948 – "Article 2 of the Convention defines genocide as ... "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such:

1. Killing members of the group;
2. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
3. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
4. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
5. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

All these criteria do not have to be present – as the word "any" indicates. In the case of Gaza, it should be abundantly clear that the Israeli government's activity falls within criteria a, b and c.

To that can be added a multi-decade occupation (since 1967), apartheid, humiliation and other elements that, in and of themselves, do not constitute genocide.

Finally, it is extraordinarily important to note that – [as pointed out by UN experts](#):

"The international community has an obligation to prevent atrocity crimes, including genocide, and should immediately consider all diplomatic, political and economic measures to that end."

We believe that this *obligation* does place the West's complicity in the genocide – thanks to arms and ammunition export and political side-taking statements – in a particularly tragical light.

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