

12 AID AGENCIES CALL ON UK GOVERNMENT TO PUT CIVILIANS FIRST IN ISRAEL GAZA CONFLICT

EMERGENCIES

Press Releases

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In a joint statement, 12 aid agencies - Oxfam GB, Action Against Hunger, War Child, Islamic Relief, Christian Aid, CAFOD, Plan International UK, Humanity and Inclusion, Action Aid UK, Medical Aid for Palestinians, Care International UK, Norwegian Refugee Council - said:

We are horrified by the escalating violence in recent days and the mounting civilian death toll in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank. Nothing can ever justify the deliberate targeting of civilians; hostage taking; cutting off food and water supplies; and indiscriminate and disproportionate military attacks.

In Israel, at least 1300 Israelis and foreign nationals have been killed. Nearly 1900 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, and scores of people have died in the West Bank. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been displaced from their homes.

The Government of Israel has ordered the entire population of northern Gaza to evacuate, with a devastating effect. For many it is impossible - there are hospitalised people, children, elderly people and those with disabilities who cannot move. Even for those who could move

there is insufficient food, water and medical supplies, as critical supplies are cut off, placing the lives of all 2 million people in Gaza at risk.

The priority now must be to prevent further suffering. The UK should be using its influence to ensure International Humanitarian Law is upheld, that civilians are protected in accordance with those laws, and that they have access to critical lifesaving humanitarian support.

We call for the Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Foreign Secretary James Cleverly to urgently:

- Press all parties to agree to an immediate de-escalation and cessation of hostilities;
- Ensure the immediate, unconditional release of all persons deprived of liberty, most urgently children, pregnant women and mothers with infants and young children, the wounded and sick held captive by armed groups in Gaza;
- Press all parties to allow emergency aid to be delivered in Gaza and allow access to displaced people. This must include an immediate end to the total siege ensuring unfettered humanitarian access, including delivery of medical supplies, food, fuel and water;
- Ensure measures are taken to protect and provide for the humanitarian needs of children, and other especially vulnerable groups;
- Prioritise the protection of all civilians from military action, and work within the constraints of Common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions, to respect International Humanitarian Law and to work to ensure all States and other armed actors do so.

/Ends

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