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**Human rights situation in Palestine and other
occupied Arab territories**

Joint written statement* submitted by Initiatives of Change International, The Next Century Foundation, non- governmental organizations in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[02 June 2025]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.

Considerations in Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

This Urgent Statement on the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict is hereby submitted jointly by the signatory NGOs, in accordance with their UN ECOSOC Consultative Status.

The protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict has continued for too long causing excessive suffering, widespread destruction and the intolerable loss of countless lives since 1948. Any response to the current situation needs to reflect a greater sense of urgency, given the reality of relentless slaughter and destruction.

The conflict is impacting Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Iran, Iraq, Jordan and Egypt. These countries need to be included in any attempt to resolve this conflict.

The purpose of this statement is to provide a checklist of fourteen crucial considerations which will determine the success of any attempt to resolve the conflict.

The signatory NGOs to this statement emphasise the need for parallel processes to both achieve a lasting ceasefire and resolve this protracted conflict, without either process being a precondition of the other. The stability of a ceasefire depends on progress in resolving the conflict. Agreement is needed on measurable milestones to ensure that progress is both timely and tangible.

This approach, combined with transparent accountability mechanisms, could pave a way towards both peacebuilding and resolution of the conflict.

The 3-stage ceasefire agreement entering into effect on 19 January 2025 was hoped to provide a step towards a just and lasting settlement. Its failure follows the failure of many other agreements reached in the course of trying to resolve this conflict. Each failure has led to reduced trust in the political process.

The governance of post-war Gaza, planned for discussion in stage 3 of the ceasefire agreement, could be shaped in accordance with the Beijing Declaration on Ending Division and Strengthening Palestinian National Unity, concluded on 23 July 2024. This could expand into the formation of a representative accountable national unity government for Palestine.

A lasting peace can only be built on equal respect for – and realisation of – human rights for all, whether they are in the State of Israel or in countries or territories bordering Israel. As the Golden Rule mosaic at UN Headquarters in New York puts it, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”.

EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICT HAVE MORE CHANCE OF SUCCESS IF THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS (IRRESPECTIVE OF THE ORDER) ARE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT:

1. “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results” (A. Einstein)

Any new agreement would have to differ significantly from previous agreements, with stronger measures to ensure compliance by all parties, and a commitment to the humane survival of all people affected.

Direct discussions between the US administration and Hamas provide a model for solution-focussed communication with key stakeholders, irrespective of political differences.

MAINTAINING A CEASEFIRE

2. Any successful ceasefire agreement will need to aim for equal security for all countries and territories in the region, offering all comparable levels of protection against attack, especially airborne attack.

At an individual level, this calls for equal respect for – and realisation of – the right to life, enshrined in Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

3. Externally imposing a permanent durable ceasefire between Israel and all regions involved in the conflict. This will need to be mandated by a UN Security Council resolution under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter.

4. Internationally supported forces to maintain law and order, peace and security, which:

a. are mandated by the UN Security Council under UN Charter, Chapter 7,

b. include a contingent of observers to constantly update and publish information on the current state of compliance by all parties with the terms of the latest version of the ceasefire agreement.

c. include a ceasefire monitoring force, to ensure that any violations of the ceasefire agreement do not lead to a resumption of hostilities.

d. are monitored by credible authorities with international accountability mechanisms accessible to all residents of the territories in which they operate,

e. prevent the territories from launching or receiving a violent attack

HUMANITARIAN MEASURES

5. Releasing all hostages and prisoners, permitting their return to the areas where they were living when they were apprehended.

6. Unrestricted access and protection for UN relief organisations, including UNRWA, in their areas of responsibility, while ensuring the inviolability of UN premises, in accordance with the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the UN.

7. Unrestricted access and protection for the media, and for relief organisations approved by the UN.

ENDING ILLEGAL OCCUPATION

8. The implementation of rulings of the International Court of Justice.

9. The obligation on all states to ensure equal respect for – and realisation of – human rights and to abide by all UN resolutions, international law, conventions, covenants and treaties applicable to the State in question, including ending any state of illegal occupation. This obligation holds true, irrespective of any change in government, the elapse of time or ‘facts on the ground’, such as settlements or other structures.

10. Therefore, all military forces which are illegally occupying Palestine and other Occupied Arab Territories need to be withdrawn.

ENSURING EQUAL RESPECT FOR – AND REALISATION OF – HUMAN RIGHTS

11. The right of self determination applies to all people equally. It derives from ICCPR Article 1 and Article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination will be realised by ending the occupation and recognising Palestine as a UN member state, followed by negotiation on its boundaries.

12. The necessity for Palestinians and Israelis to live in sovereign states side-by-side, with comparable security, freedom, opportunity, respect and dignity. This would be a starting point. It is hoped that this would enable cooperation to grow, with the possibility of new political options to emerge, such as a confederation.

13. All governing authorities in Israel, Palestine and the territories that have come under Israeli de-facto occupation, must be selected without external interference and must have access to the resources to fulfil their responsibilities. The stability of each authority will depend on how far it is seen by the inhabitants of the territories it governs to represent their interests and respond to their needs.

14. Guaranteeing minimum provisions for survival:

a. ICESCR Article 11 requires the provision of resources to ensure the survival of all residents of Israel, Palestine and all other territories that have come under Israeli de-facto occupation. Without this, some will resort to criminal or immoral activity out of financial desperation.

b. Considering the legitimate needs, responsibilities and rights of all inhabitants of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including settlers and Palestinian refugees, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. These considerations also include restorative justice and the rehabilitation of communities and individuals and the supportive infrastructure necessary for their human security.

c. Cooperation between Israel and states bordering Israel for their essential supplies of fuel, electrical power, food and water will pragmatically build trust. Alternative sources need to be made available, to ensure that no country can use the withdrawal of these resources as coercion. The natural environment, (e.g. underground water, watershed basins) has no political boundaries. This necessitates co-ordination and co-operation in the region for a win-win situation.

The above fourteen considerations offer an alternative for those who see violence as the only effective response to perceived injustice, neglect or existential threat.

This statement focuses on resolution of the conflict. Accountability for past actions needs to be pursued separately and in parallel through judicial means.

Achieving these objectives calls for a higher level of commitment and cooperation among all UN member states. This requires skilled diplomacy between people of good will. This enabled France and Germany to build friendship and economic cooperation in the mid-twentieth century, despite having fought three major wars against each other in 75 years.

Civil society in both countries since 1945 helped people meet and reconcile with their former enemies, understand reality and build bridges of trust.

Likewise, in the Middle East, everyone can play some part in enabling trust to grow between all states of the region.

WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO THIS ESSENTIAL LONG-TERM TRUST-BUILDING WORK.