

19th October 2023

Caretaker Prime Minister
Prime Minister's Office
Islamic Republic of Pakistan
Islamabad

Email: info@pmo.gov.pk

Attention: His Excellency Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar, Caretaker Prime Minister, Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Subject: Concern over Pakistan's Stance on Palestinian Rights

Your Excellency,

We, the concerned citizens of Pakistan, are writing to express our deep disappointment in the government's first response to the current situation in Palestine and the escalation of war crimes by Israel against the hapless Palestinian people. Our beloved nation, historically a staunch advocate for Palestinian rights and self-determination, has been known for its principled stance in support of justice, human rights, and the dignity of all oppressed peoples. The tone in the first official statements released by the PM Office and the Foreign Office have, however, caused us profound concern.

It is with heavy hearts that we have observed Israel's continuous violations of international law and its flouting of obligations under international humanitarian law from its inception as a nation state through subsequent decades. The relentless expansion of its territories, the annexation of the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem, the enforcement of apartheid-like conditions in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank as well as the constant expansion of illegal settlements therein, not to mention the frequent use of violent military means to subjugate and terrify Palestinian civilians is a direct consequence of the world turning a blind eye to the excesses of settler colonialism. The stark disparity in the living conditions of Israelis and Palestinians in the occupied territories is deeply distressing for any human with a conscience. Pakistanis believe that the rights of Palestinians to self-determination, self-defense, and resistance are inherent, just as they are for any oppressed people. Decolonization is our common battle-cry.

As you know, Israel's collective punishment of Palestinians is a blatant violation of the Geneva Convention. The horrific carpet bombing and shelling of Gaza that we are witnessing today – relentless and brutal – which has already erased all living generations of 45 families from the Gaza Civil Registry and caused the death of over 3000 and counting Palestinians including a 1000 children, not to mention the complete destruction of buildings and infrastructure in the world's largest open-air prison – is an open and shut case of genocide and ethnic cleansing. Israel's actions are rightly being criticized in massive protests all over the world. Every human heart today aches with the gruesome burden of Israel's war crimes. The bombing by Israel of the one and only exit out of Gaza after demanding the civilian population use it to flee, and the heartless targeting of innocent lives trapped in hospitals, schools and homes marked for Israeli airstrikes are just a continuation of Israel's genocidal policies. Pakistanis witness these scenes of



unspeakable cruelty with deep anguish as the cries for justice from the Palestinian people continue to fall on deaf ears.

On behalf of the citizens of Pakistan, we wish to remind the government that the issue of self-determination of Palestinians is intrinsically linked to the issue of self-determination by our brothers and sisters in Kashmir. Pakistan, guided by the principles of justice, has historically stood firm for both causes. We must not forget the commonality of these struggles and urge a solution where human rights and dignity prevail. We must be uncompromising and clear in our official communications and our actions.

The teachings of the Quran and the principles laid down in our country's constitution, developed under the guiding light of our religious texts, underline the significance of justice, human rights, and moral values. No material advantages can ever be realized when these principles, which resonate deeply with our convictions, are violated.

We urge our government, therefore, to continue to reaffirm its commitment to stand in solidarity with Palestine, as it has historically done. We trust that the values and principles that have long defined Pakistan's foreign policy are upheld, and demand that a very hard-hitting statement, more in keeping with the aspirations of our people and the sacred teachings of our faith — like the one from Pakistani citizens, attached below — be released.

Yours sincerely,

SABKA

We are committed to amplifying the voices of the citizens of Pakistan.

Statement of Pakistani Citizens

As a representative group of Pakistan's concerned citizens, SABKA calls upon the international community; the United States and nations of Western Europe, especially France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, through the offices of the United Nations, the Security Council and the UNHCR, to play an active and constructive role in enacting justice for the Palestinian people.

In addition to the United Nations, we also urge the International Court of Justice, the Arab League, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to promptly reaffirm their commitment to upholding international law, human rights, and justice for the Palestinian people. This is especially crucial for those in the occupied Gaza and the West Bank who were recently referred to as 'animals' by the Israeli Defense Minister and are currently enduring unspeakable brutality, war crimes and the threat of extermination by Israel in a brazen exercise of collective punishment.

Pakistanis support the Palestinian right to self-determination and self-defense and demand the following:

WE DEMAND:

1. **Ceasefire:** The international community must immediately negotiate a ceasefire in the region to prevent the massacre of innocent Palestinian civilians by the Israeli regime.

2. **Regulating Media:** The international community refrain from legitimizing the ethnic cleansing and genocide of the Palestinian people living under brutal Israeli occupation by issuing balanced statements highlighting Israel's seven decades long flouting of international law, regulating and penalizing instances of pro-Israeli bias in the media.
3. **Stopping Military Aid:** Immediately stopping all kinds of financial and military aid and export of weapons to Israel.
4. **United Nations Action:** The United Nations, particularly the Security Council, must take immediate and effective action to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This includes the enforcement of relevant resolutions and the prevention of violence against Palestinian civilians.
5. **Accountability:** The UN must establish mechanisms to hold all parties accountable for violations of international law, including war crimes. This includes ensuring that investigations are conducted to address human rights abuses and bring those responsible to justice.
6. **Protection of Civilians:** The United Nations must prioritize the protection of Palestinian civilians, particularly in the Gaza Strip, ensure that they have access to essential services, humanitarian aid, and medical care, and that food, water, electricity and gas are provided and not cut off or restricted by Israel.
7. **Mediation:** The UN should actively engage in diplomatic efforts to facilitate a negotiated settlement between Israelis and Palestinians, based on internationally recognized parameters and principle and immediately halt the expansion of illegal settlements in Palestinian territories.
8. **UNRWA Support:** Western countries and international partners must provide increased support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) to ensure the well-being and rights of Palestinian refugees.
9. **Freedom of Expression:** Democracies must uphold the principles of freedom of expression and assembly by reversing bans on peaceful protests and demonstrations in support of Palestinian rights. These actions are in direct contradiction to democratic values as are the media narratives that seek to suppress the voices of Palestinians in a clear exercise of spin and bias toward an apartheid regime.
10. **Support of BDS:** Democracies must rescind the legal bans on the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement and allow for peaceful advocacy in favor of Palestinian rights. The right to boycott is a form of nonviolent resistance and a protected freedom of expression.
11. **Advocacy for a Free State of Palestine:** Democratic states and their citizens must actively advocate for a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including the establishment of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine based on pre-1967

borders, as mandated by the UN, and the two-state solution. There must be an immediate ban on illegal settlements and a rollback of the expansion that has occurred over the past several years in contravention of international law.

12. Increased Diplomacy: The international community must intensify diplomatic efforts to promote a peaceful resolution to the conflict and work with international partners to facilitate negotiations between the parties.

13. Humanitarian Support: States must increase humanitarian support to Palestinian civilians affected by the conflict, including essential services, medical aid, and reconstruction efforts.

We expect that your office will take urgent steps to bring an end to this humanitarian catastrophe and finally bring justice to the long-ignored plight of Palestine and the Palestinian people.

Signed by SABKA Team Members:

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Copy to:

Caretaker Foreign Minister of Pakistan
International Court of Justice
UN Commission on Human Rights
Arab League

UN Secretary General
UN Security Council
Organization of Islamic Cooperation