



## الاتحاد العام لنقابات عمال فلسطين - محافظات غزة Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions - Gaza Strip

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July 31, 2014

Dear brothers and sisters in the labor movement, and all people who are working hard to build a better future for themselves and for their families in the United States of America, and those who believe in peace and justice.

As we write this message from Gaza, our families are facing a genocidal war waged by Israel. The State of Israel is using the most advanced killing machines made and exported from the United States of America. They are killing Palestinian children and eliminating entire families. They are denying the population of Gaza their right to live in peace and dignity.

The Gaza Strip is a small space, about 250 square miles, and is home to approximately 1.8 million people. Before the current massacre, the people of Gaza were already living in very difficult conditions. Israel imposed a siege and blockade, and has been controlling the air, sea, and land of Gaza for more than seven years. This blockade has also included control and closure of border crossings, and the restriction of movement, including of sick patients and students.

The trade market, import and export, has been restricted. As a result, we have witnessed and experienced the destruction of agriculture and the ongoing annihilation of workers, farmers and fishermen. The extreme levels of poverty and unemployment have been rising. The people of Gaza have seen a decline in their health and well-being, including the lack of educational services and severe shortages in access to healthy food. In addition, Israel controls the drinking water and electricity, and as a result, Gaza has had outages of water and electricity for up to 12 hours a day. As many scholars, journalists and human rights activists have noted, "Gaza is the world's biggest prison."

Under the pretext of the killing of three settlers in the West Bank, with no evidence pointing to any Palestinian group, Israel with its racist right-wing government, started its current offensive war, which has resulted in more than 1,600 Palestinians killed and more than 6,700 others injured, mostly serious and severe. Many of those killed were civilians, and more than one quarter of them were children and women.

In addition, more than 2,000 houses have been completely destroyed and nearly 3,000 houses have been partially destroyed – with more than half of them uninhabitable. This war has displaced more than 400,000 citizens from their homes. In addition, 95 mosques have been totally demolished, and 10 hospitals have been directly targeted, with one hospital totally destroyed.

Israel is targeting municipal workers, civil defense vehicles and ambulances – with more than six paramedics killed. During this war, we have experienced the attacks on more than 50 headquarters of the police and security services, 95 schools and educational facilities, and 7 media offices; many journalists and photographers have been killed. Also, 40 commercial fishing boats have been destroyed. Experts in the Interior Ministry estimate more than 15,000 tons of explosives have been dropped on the Gaza Strip. Economists estimate the Gaza Strip losses, as a result of the aggression, at more than US\$3 billion thus far.

Dear friends, it's your turn NOW to take an historic stand and take on the responsibility to stand by truth and justice and urge immediate action through the following:

1 – Pressure your government to stop the unjust aggression on our people and to stop spending money for weapons for occupation that kill us and kill our children.

2 – Work on a local and national level to urge your elected officials to stop dealing with the institutions that profit from the occupation and death of Palestinians.

3 – Educate and build awareness among the labor movements of the U.S. and urge them to condemn the Israeli aggression and to boycott Israel through various means, i.e., cultural, educational and commercial exchange with the occupation, while exposing the crimes of the occupation and its practices.

4 – Reach out and urge the international community through the United Nations to work by all means to enable the Palestinian people to attain and exercise their right to self-determination, through the embodiment of the Palestinian State, which is recognized by the General Assembly with an overwhelming majority, and to use the means of international law, including punitive means, to end the occupation of the Palestinian State, and to hold Israel accountable.

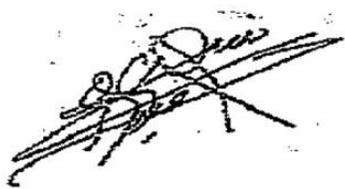
5 – Call upon the United Nations to provide protection for the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, and to provide safeguards to prevent a repeat of aggression upon the Palestinian territories, particularly the Gaza Strip.

6 – Urge the United Nations to enforce the Geneva Conventions, and to ensure that Israel – as a member State that is a signatory of these agreements, including the human rights agreements – complies fully with these international conventions.

7 – Call on signatory States to the Geneva Conventions to fulfill their obligation to work to ensure the application, and to implement its jurisdiction to hold war crimes accountable, regardless of the nationality of the perpetrator and place of commission, to pave the way for rendering Israeli war criminals accountable, and end the impunity they have enjoyed for decades.

8 – Urge governments around the world and humanitarian organizations to declare the Gaza Strip a disaster area that is in need of major reconstruction and humanitarian aid for urgent relief to the displaced and affected people.

Finally, we are all confident and hope that you will stand with us to influence and put pressure on your government and the Israeli government alike, to stop the criminal aggression on our people. Your actions may help to save thousands of innocent children, women, youth and elders – as well as their dreams of living in security and peace.



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