

Statement about Gaza

As Israel begins its ground assault with more than 220 Palestinians dead reports the Ma'an News Agency, we call on the international community to take strong measures to stop this carnage. It is important to understand that nearly all the casualties have been on the Palestinian side. To date, there has been but one Israeli casualty.

Israel's disregard for UN resolutions and violations of international law must end. Writing on ZNet, American linguist and political activist, Noam Chomsky reminds us that 'Israel's latest exercise in savagery' has mostly killed and wounded hundreds of civilians.

The bombing of homes, hospitals, infrastructure and non-military targets such as the home for disabled people in Beit Lahiya on Saturday July 12, is testimony to the fraudulence of this war. In a scathing piece in the Israeli paper Haaretz, earlier this week, journalist Gideon Levy told us the death toll included '24 children as of noon on Saturday [July 12]; hundreds of people injured, in addition to horror and destruction. One school and one hospital have already been bombed. The aim is to strike homes, and no amount of justification can help: It's a war crime...'

And there was yet another war crime among many recently: the killing of four children playing ball on the beach. All four boys, aged between nine and 11 according to Palestinian news reports, were from the one family. The accounts of their senseless deaths are disturbing.

Yet, we have been buoyed by protests around Australia and the world in support of the Palestinian people--including thousands of Jewish Americans in the US over last weekend--and we urge the politicians to listen to this grass roots response.

Despite the escalation of the war and the helplessness of the Palestinians in the face of sophisticated and deadly Israeli weapons, the US still maintains that Israel has the right to defend itself, with Australia taking a similar line. This assault on a defenceless people should never be tolerated.

Australian opinion has shifted on the issue with more Australians being opposed to the building of settlements on occupied land as well as supporting Palestine's bid for statehood. Our government's response to this horrific war should reflect public sentiment.

The Marrickville Peace Group supports a political solution to the conflict, the end to settlement building on occupied land, the withdrawal of Israel from occupied East Jerusalem and an end to the blockade of Gaza by Israel and Egypt.

For more information:

Ma'an Newsagency : On a Gaza beach, a blast, then a second, and 4 children dead

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=713803>

Noam Chomsky: Gaza's Torment, Israel's Crimes, Our Responsibilities

<http://zcomm.org/zcommentary/gazas-torment-israels-crimes-our-responsibilities/>

Amena Saleem: Brian Eno joins criticism of BBC's bias against Palestinians

<http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/amina-saleem/brian-eno-joins-criticism-bbcs-bias-against-palestinians>

Miko Peled: "Incitement Starts at the Top": After Arab Teen's Murder, Israeli Gov't Accused of Fueling Hatred

http://www.democracynow.org/2014/7/8/the_incitement_starts_at_the_top

Gideon Levy: Israel's real purpose in Gaza operation? To kill Arabs

<http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.604653>

Robert Fisk: The true Gaza back-story that the Israelis aren't telling this week

www.independent.co.uk/voices/the-true-gaza-backstory-that-the-israelis-arent-telling-this-week-9596120.html

2011 Public Opinion Poll

<http://www.coalitionforpalestine.org/?s=opinion+polls>