



14 October 2023

**Statement: The order to evacuate 1.1 million people from northern Gaza  
defies the rules of war and basic humanity**

Israel is continuing its brutal and criminal assault against the Palestinian civilian population that it has held captive in Gaza, the most densely populated civilian area on earth, for over 16 years. The scenes in Gaza are horrific: entire families are being massacred, and nearly half a million people have been displaced from their homes since 7 October. Over 1800 Palestinians have been killed, including hundreds of women and over 550 children. Israeli bombardments have reduced entire neighbourhoods to rubble, and continue targeting hospitals, schools, ambulances, residential buildings, emergency shelters. Israel has cut off all water, electricity, fuel and food supplies to Gaza, disregarding the ICRC's warnings that without electricity, hospitals risk turning into morgues. **This war crime of massive proportions is now being compounded by Israel's military orders calling to forcefully transfer 1.1 million Palestinians, including sick and wounded hospital patients, from northern Gaza.** This flagrant attempt to depopulate and expel the Palestinian civilian population constitutes a grave breach of the 4th Geneva Convention and the Rome Statute. This is collective punishment, ethnic cleansing, a crime against humanity, and blatant State terrorism happening before the eyes of the world in all its barbarity, criminality and inhumanity. As stated by the head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs: ***"The order to evacuate 1.1 million people from northern Gaza defies the rules of war and basic humanity."***

Israel cannot be permitted to continue ethnically cleansing the Palestinian people from their homes and lands. The Palestinian people must be protected from the State terror and crimes against humanity being perpetrated against them. The lives of civilians must be spared. A ceasefire and halt to the violence must be made an immediate priority.

We reiterate our calls for an end to this hellish violence that has been unleashed on the Palestinian people. We urgently appeal to the international community, including Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, and all peace-loving nations to act now to halt this humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, and to mobilize all efforts to stop Israel's carnage and crimes against millions of innocent civilians.

We echo the calls of UN Secretary-General António Guterres for life-saving supplies to be allowed into Gaza, and the calls from the United Nations, the World Health Organisation, and countless human rights defenders and humanitarian organisations demanding that Israel rescind its forced-displacement order. This ongoing Nakba (Catastrophe) against the Palestinian people must be stopped immediately. In the words of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: "We should not look back and regret that we did not do everything in our power to avoid a disaster."

*For more information, please contact the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific.*

