



**Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
Heads of Mission Group in Canberra**

Press Release

June 9th, 2021

Canberra, Australia

Meeting of OIC Heads of Mission Group

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation Heads of Mission (OIC-HoM) Group in Canberra held a meeting at the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra on June 3, 2021, chaired by the Ambassador of Indonesia, to discuss its concern on the effects of the Israeli aggression on the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). The OIC-HoM is the largest diplomatic Group in Canberra with a membership of 26 diplomatic missions.

The Group welcomed the ceasefire in the region, brokered by Egypt, and stressed that the ceasefire will not be sustainable in the long-term until the root cause of the Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights is addressed, which is Israel's continued occupation of Palestine.

Israel's aggression on the Gaza Strip killed at least 270 Palestinians, including 70 children, and has targeted vital infrastructure facilities including Gaza's only COVID-19 clinic, other medical centres and hospitals, schools, and a tower housing international media office.

In this regard, Israel as the occupying power has misled the so-called self-defence. It is the Palestinian people, who are under Israeli's occupation and aggression, who needs to defend themselves. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an advisory opinion in 2004 which, among others, indicated that the term of self-defence against violence coming from occupied territory under its control could not be used. And referring to UN Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) Gaza is still under occupation by Israel.

The Israeli settlers and occupation forces has continued their violations in Al-Haram Al-Shareef and Al-Aqsa Mosque. Hundreds of Palestinians in East Jerusalem are still facing forcible evictions from their homes, as part of Israel's ongoing settlement colonisation efforts. Israel has expressed flagrant disrespect for the holy sites in Jerusalem and the freedom of religion by blocking Palestinian worshippers from accessing Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Church of Holy Sepulchre. Israel's violent aggression in storming Al-Aqsa Mosque and attacking worshippers, is a gross violations of international humanitarian law.

Israel's continued aggression against the Palestinian people constitutes war crimes and crimes against humanity. There is a need for accountability and pressure on Israel to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people. To ensure the safety of Palestinian civilians and to protect the status of Al-Haram Al-Sharif compound as the holy place for three religions, it is necessary to have a temporary international presence in Jerusalem.

Noting Australia's positive role in maintaining regional and global peace, the OIC-HoM Group in Canberra seeks the support of the Australian Government to take all necessary steps to prevent any future recurrence of these atrocities by Israel. We also look forward to Australia's continued support for the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination based on the two-state solution, in accordance with international law and relevant UN resolutions, and to recognize the State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

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