

PNGO and Human Rights Organizations Calls for Immediately Ending Suffering of Civilians Due to Electricity Outages

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The Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO) and human rights organizations in the Gaza Strip express their deep concern for the deteriorating humanitarian conditions of the population of the Gaza Strip due to the continued tightened closure imposed by Israel on 1.8 million people and its impact on all aspects of their lives, while the international community remains silent towards human rights violations perpetrated by Israeli occupation forces. PNGO and human rights organizations are deeply concerned for the aggravation of the crisis of electricity outages resulting from these policies which leads to an imminent humanitarian disaster seriously impacting all vital interests of the population, including water and sanitation services, educational services and all daily necessary vital services.

PNGO and human rights organizations are concerned that the deterioration in all aspects of the population's life may further aggravate as a result of the continuous consequences of the Palestinian political split and the failure of its two parties to solve

the power and fuel crisis which has been persistent since late June 2006 when Israeli forces bombarded the Gaza Power Plant.

PNGO and human rights organizations observe with deep concern the deterioration of humanitarian conditions of the Gaza Strip's population since 01 November 2013, when the Gaza Power Plant was forced off due to the lack of fuel. Both governments in Ramallah and Gaza have failed to take any effective steps to overcome this crisis and its consequences, and accordingly all daily basic services needed by the population have disastrously deteriorated. As a result of the crisis, electricity supplies to all vital facilities, including houses and health, environmental and educational facilities, have been sharply decreased; electricity is off for 12 hours and then on for 6 hours only.

PNGO and human rights organizations believe that the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip is essentially a result of Israeli systematic policies against the civilian population, including bombarding the sole power plant in the Gaza Strip in late June 2006, and decreasing fuel supplies to the power plant in the context of the illegal closure imposed on the Gaza Strip. PNGO and human rights organizations are aware of the continuous deterioration of the human rights and humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip due to the crisis of electricity outages, while the international community remains silent towards human rights violations perpetrated by Israeli forces, which have created and perpetuated the crisis, including targeting the infrastructure of the electricity sectors, such as supply and transmission lines and towers, during repeated incursions into the Gaza Strip, or using fuel and other consumptive goods as a means to punish the population, and the Israeli authorities' failure to meet their obligations as an occupying power to maintain the operation of medical facilities and water and sanitation services.

It is worth noting that the electricity crisis has become a serious challenge to normal life of the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip, which poses imminent risks to all aspects of daily life due to its direct impacts. Currently, the crisis has led to suspension

of many health care programs and services, waste water treatment, water supplies, especially to high buildings, and educational services. Vital economic sectors, especially workshops and commercial stores, have sustained large economic losses, due to Israeli attacks and the closure imposed on the Gaza Strip. Life for Palestinians living in high buildings has become extremely difficult due to the lack of electricity that is necessary to operate elevators and provide water supplies. The crisis has also impacted the educational process and the economic and living conditions of the population due to their inability to provide alternatives to electricity supplies, especially with the high prices of fuel which the population cannot afford. Additionally, the electricity crisis and the population's efforts to find alternatives have caused horrible human tragedies. According to information of human rights organizations, 16 Palestinians, including 14 children and one woman, have died by fire, and 9 others, including 5 children, have sustained burns since the beginning of 2012.

PNGO and human rights organizations strongly condemn the failure of relevant parties to fulfill their obligations and take practical steps to ensure ending the suffering of the civilian population, while all justifications claimed by them are not acceptable. There are concerns that the Gaza Strip may turn into an area of a disaster due to the deterioration of humanitarian conditions. PNGO and human rights organizations believe that all concerned parties, including the international community, the occupying power pursuant to its international legal obligations and both governments in Ramallah and Gaza, should ensure protection of and respect for the inherent human dignity as a value whose waste can never be justified, or be subject to material or political bargains. Causing this human suffering that may lead to loss of lives can never be justified.

PNGO and human rights organizations in the Gaza Strip call upon all parties to immediately act to stop the suffering of the civilian population and find sustainable and strategic solutions that take into the consideration the civilian population's needs and ensure protection of their lives and respect for their basic rights, including supplying all

consignments of medicines and foods and basic services that are necessary for the population. PNGO and human rights organizations emphasize the following:

1. Israeli occupation authorities are legally responsible for the deteriorating humanitarian conditions of the Gaza Strip's population and the illegal closure imposed on the Gaza Strip as a form of collective punishment, as Israel is an occupying power according to the international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.
2. The international community is responsible for the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip due to its failure to fulfill its legal and moral obligation and compel Israel to lift the illegal closure imposed on the Gaza Strip.
3. Both governments in Gaza and Ramallah must immediately and seriously act to end the electricity crisis, overcome the differences whose price is paid by the Gaza Strip's population, abstain from pushing basic services and sectors into the political conflict, put an end to the suffering of the civilian population and find sustainable and strategic solutions that protect basic rights of people and the requirements for their adequate living conditions.

Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network

Palestinian Center for Human Rights

Al Mezan Center for Human Rights

Aldameer Association for Human Rights