



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION

GREAT MARCH OF RETURN: FREEDOM AND JUSTICE FOR GAZA



On March 30 tens of thousands of Palestinians marched at the fence to mark Land Day¹ and the one-year anniversary of the Great March of Return. Palestinians sending a loud message to apartheid regime Israel that they are going to resist and continue their fight for their right to return to their home land. The protesters are also speaking out against the blockade of the Gaza Strip and the USA' move of its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.²

Four young Palestinians killed including a 17-year-old boy- Tamer Abu el-Khair was shot in the chest east of Khan Younis in southern Gaza and- 316 protesters injured by Israeli forces during mass protests along the perimeter fence

¹ Palestinian Land Day started in 1976 after an Israeli government announcement to expropriate large swathes of land which was followed by the killing of six Palestinian protestors by the Israeli army, hundreds injured and arrested.

² Humanitarian agencies blame the blockade for the high rates of poverty and unemployment in Gaza

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with Israel. Observers are reporting that despite the gunfire and grenades, the demonstrations were considered calmer than usual.

During the Great March of Return protests – which have continued every Friday for the past year – Israeli forces killed 266 protesters and injured 30,000 more in an indiscriminate attack that constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity. Israeli forces use live ammunition, rubber bullets and tear gas.

The UN's Commission of Inquiry has found that Israel's attacks on the protesters "may constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity."

The humanitarian situation in Gaza is catastrophic as a result of Israel's 12-year-old siege. The UN says more than 90 percent of the water is unsafe for drinking and residents receive less than 12 hours of mains electricity a day. Israel has systematically appropriated Palestinian land and unlawfully exploited the natural resources over which Palestinians retain the right to self-determination, including permanent sovereignty. Since 1967, Israel has pillaged and taken control of Palestinian water, land, quarries, minerals, and gas and oil reserves both for the benefit of its own economy and that of its illegal settlements.

The Great March of Return — which began on March 30, 2018 and has not yet ended – has brought to the forefront the essence of the Palestinian cause as well as the status of the Gaza Strip. Palestinian protestors peacefully mobilize to enforce international resolutions, including UN Resolution 194 regarding the return of Palestinian refugees to their homes and lands. The Great March of Return recognizes the power of the people and is an act of collective mass action against Israel's settler-colonialism and apartheid.

Great March of Return protestors are calling for freedom, equality, and justice. Most importantly they are demanding their rights to both return and reparations are guaranteed by international law. We strongly believe the only way to end Israeli impunity is by spreading the March to the rest of the occupied Palestinian

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territories and Israel itself where 1.4 million Palestinians are treated as second class citizens. The march is creating synergy between Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories, and the diaspora with the aim of achieving legitimate rights.

It is long overdue to end the Israeli apartheid regime of settler-colonialism, occupation, and apartheid, and bring perpetrators of these violations to justice. The bloodshed of innocent Palestinian civilians in Gaza and elsewhere in Palestine must be stopped.

Gaza has become a source of inspiration for many around the world, Palestinian people are struggling for self-determination and the right to live as a free nation, rather than under Israeli occupation or control, for decades.

The international community has the responsibility to pressure the state of Israel and ensure its compliance with international law, and to take measures that will put an end to the impunity of the state of Israel.

In particular western countries, have the responsibility to act and stop Israel's impunity, and stop supplying Israel with the weapons that it uses to kill Palestinian civilians.

ICSFT joins rights groups call for a military embargo against Israel. We reiterate our call to boycott, divest from, and impose sanctions on Israel. We urge UN and member states to ensure accountability and justice, notably in view of, the gravity of the violations, and the fact that they are ongoing now.

ICSFT urges the international community to support the accountability resolution, which condemns the intentional use of unlawful lethal and other excessive force in violation of international law and UN charter.

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