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IADL CONDEMNS ILLEGAL ISRAELI AGGRESSION IN GAZA IN THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE TERMS AND CALLS UPON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO END ISRAEL'S IMPUNITY AND TO TAKE CONCRETE ACTIONS TO END THE VIOLENCE.

The International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL), with consultative status at ECOSOC and thousands of affiliated lawyers and organizations around the world, condemns in the strongest possible terms the current aggression by Israel against the people of the Gaza Strip.

Together with a number of Palestinian NGO's our affiliate the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights has released the following statement::

“Since Wednesday evening, 14 November 2012, Israeli Occupation Forces have continued their offensive on the Gaza Strip, codenamed "Operation Pillar of Defence" through aerial, marine and ground bombardment throughout the Gaza Strip, using missiles and artilleries. This is occurring amidst increasing Israeli threats to expand the offensive with a ground invasion; large numbers of Israeli troops have been deployed at the borders of the Gaza Strip, and it is reported that 75,000 reservists have been called up.

Contrary to claims by the Israeli government that Israeli forces do not target civilians, the outcome of this offensive so far has indicated that it is primarily civilians who pay the price. 27 civilians have been killed, including 10 children and 5 women, and 520 others, including 140 children and 48 women, have been wounded. Israeli forces have attacked civilian facilities, including houses, mosques, churches and schools, and governmental buildings of a completely civil nature, such as the buildings of the Council of Ministers and the Civil Department of the Ministry of Interior.

Over the past 48 hours, Israeli forces have intensified the bombardments in a serious escalation, targeting civilian lives and property. This morning, Israeli forces directly bombarded media offices in Gaza City, seriously wounding a number of journalists.

There has been no safe place in the Gaza Strip, which essentially does not have any shelter where civilians can have protection from day and night bombardments. Approximately 1.7 million

people have come under Israeli forces fire, and their lives are in danger. Many people have been killed or wounded while inside their houses, as a result of the bombarding of residential areas and their vicinities, with bombs weighing up to one ton dropped by F-16 fighter jets.

During this offensive, the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip is dramatically deteriorating, especially with the closure of all border crossings between the Gaza Strip and Israel and the denial of entry of basic goods and materials into the Gaza Strip, including medical consignments, food and fuel. This violations the obligations of Israel as an occupying power under the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which requires Israel to facilitate the passage of medical and foods consignments to the civilian population in the occupied territory in all circumstances.”

IADL calls upon the International Community to take all steps to end this aggression. IADL urges the Security Council order an end the current aggression and demand that Israel respect the UN Charter and International Law. Consistent with our prior statements, a US veto against actions to prevent the Security Council to act to end the aggression would be an illegal use of the veto. IADL also requests that the international community make clear that it will hold Israel accountable for its crimes. IADL calls on the international community to help negotiate a cease fire and take steps to move toward peace.

IADL also joins its affiliate Palestinian Centre for Human Rights in demanding the following actions.

1. IADL requests the urgent convening of a Special Session of the Human Rights Council, and calls upon all parties to fulfil their binding legal obligations under international humanitarian law.
2. IADL calls upon the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to convene and act to protect civilians in light of the seriousness of the ongoing escalation.
3. IADL reminds the international community of the last assault on the Gaza Strip, in which civilians bore the brunt of political inaction during a large scale military offensive. We should not wait for the same atrocities to be committed again.

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