



Action Alert for Gaza **PALESTINE 29 December 2008**

BREAK THE SILENCE AND ACT TO STOP THE MASSACRES IN GAZA

As the World celebrates Christmas and prepares to welcome the New Year, Israel hit the Gaza strip with most vicious and deadliest air strikes since 1967 killing almost 310 people amongst which are 21 children and 9 women, and injuring over 1,400 others. The Israeli officials had the nerves to announce that this is just the beginning and the worst is yet to come!

Since the Israeli Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, the Palestinians have been witnessing daily killings, sufferings, sieges, imprisonment, check points, home demolishing, and the world has been turning a blind eye on the atrocities of the longest and ugliest occupation which turned into the "Holocaust" of modern history. Israel has broken all agreements, and shot rockets over Gaza, justifying the killing of over 300 people as retaliation for one Israeli killed by Palestinian rockets. Since Saturday, the Israeli rockets have been striking vital sites, including medical stores, hospitals, mosques, universities, civilian houses, and the police headquarters where a new batch was graduating. Although Israel has been claiming that it ended its Occupation of Gaza, yet since the beginning of 2007, Gaza has been under siege, with all borders closed. Except for a few random days, electricity has been cut off several times, for weeks in a row, gas and food supplies were denied entry into Gaza for long enough to cause a serious medical and humanitarian disaster.

As Human Rights Agencies in Palestine have contested: "the ongoing siege of the Gaza Strip has left medical facilities in the Strip incapable of meeting the needs of



hundreds more who have been injured which will likely lead to an increase in the number of deaths. According to Israeli officials, these attacks are only the beginning of an open military campaign in Gaza.

It is therefore imperative that the international community not stand in silence while Israel moves forward with impunity.”

We urge the United Nations to uphold the principles upon which it was founded and to respect the resolutions which are stacked unimplemented in its annals, foremost amongst which is the implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians and an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Arab land.

As the YWCA of Palestine mourns the death of all these innocent civilians and prays that their souls may rest in peace, we urge

- 1- All YWCA's and supporting organizations around the World to organize a candle vigil prayer on Thursday the 8th of January, in respect of the souls of all the innocent killed in this massacre
- 2- All YWCA's, Humanitarian and Human Rights Agencies, as well as International NGOs and international community to call on their respective governments to pressure the Israeli Government to immediately put an end to the slaughter and massacres of innocent civilians and lift the siege on Gaza.
- 3- YWCA's around the World and the international community to call on the UN Security Council to convene an emergency session and adopt concrete measures, including the imposition of sanctions, in order to ensure Israel's fulfillment of its obligations under international humanitarian law.
- 4- The High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions to fulfill their obligation under common Article 1 to ensure respect for the provisions of the Conventions, taking appropriate measures to compel Israel to abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular placing pivotal importance on the respect and protection of civilians from the effects of the hostilities.
- 5- All concerned to bring the Israeli political leaders to the International Court in the Hague for executing these war crimes, before it is too late and before the region explodes into more violence.

Issued on: 29 December 2008
National Council Office of the YWCA of Palestine