

**INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION (IFOR)**  
**STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN ISRAEL-PALESTINE**  
**21 May 2021**

A fresh armed confrontation has emerged in the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict. In this region, however, history is never far away. This month marks the 73<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the creation of Israel following the adoption of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution n. 181 (1947)<sup>1</sup> and the following so-called “Nakba” of 1947-48, where thousands of Palestinians lost their homes. This is still ongoing through forcible transfer, houses demolition, land grabbing and threats of further annexation of occupied land.

It is in this light that the current re-escalation of violence must be seen. Israeli authorities planned to evict Palestinian residents in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem - which Israel has annexed, even though it is occupied territory under international law - and transfer their homes to Israel settlers, Palestinians held demonstrations around East Jerusalem and Israeli forces responded by firing teargas, stun grenades, and rubber-coated steel bullets, including a violent attack against worshipers during Ramadan inside al-Aqsa Mosque.<sup>2</sup> Hamas has launched rockets into Israel and the Israelis' army responded with a massive military action in Gaza which has been under blockade since 2007 and where the pre-existing humanitarian situation is extremely fragile<sup>3</sup>.

The International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) was founded over 100 years ago in response to the horrors of the First World War. Since then, IFOR has taken a consistent stance against war and its preparation. When people, organizations and state institutions commit themselves to peace, war can be prevented, conflicts transformed through nonviolent means and systems that foster fear and hatred dismantled. When truth and justice are restored, reconciliation and healing can take place and lasting peace can be established.

**IFOR condemns all armed actions against civilians and civilian targets by the Israeli military and Hamas.** Violence only leads to more violence. We mourn for all victims and their families.

**The decades-long pattern of injustice, and violations of international law and fundamental rights has become unsustainable and inhumane.**

**IFOR welcomes this morning announcement of a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.**

**IFOR supported the call for a ceasefire by the UN Secretary General, during the Security Council meeting held on May 16<sup>4</sup>;** the UN chief stressed that the only way forward is to return to negotiations towards a two-State solution. Regrettably, the USA has reportedly blocked UNSC statements -for the third time in a week- that condemned Israel’s military response and called for a ceasefire.<sup>5</sup>

The international community should be responsible for ensuring that there are no double standards when it comes to international law and human rights violations. While it shunned Hamas fifteen years ago, at the height of the ‘war on terrorism’, Israel has not honored UN General Assembly Resolution n. 194 (1948)<sup>6</sup>, nor has it complied with scores of the UN Security Council Resolutions including n. 242 (1967) and n. 338

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<sup>1</sup>A/RES/181 (II) [https://undocs.org/A/RES/181\(II\)](https://undocs.org/A/RES/181(II))

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/05/11/jerusalem-gaza-israeli-authorities-reassert-domination>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/humanitarian-situation-in-the-gaza-strip-fast-facts-ocha-factsheet/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/05/1092042>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/17/no-us-action-after-third-uns-council-meeting-on-israel-palestine>

<sup>6</sup> A/RES/194 states the “Right to return” for Palestinian refugees.

<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/ip-ares-194.php>

(1973) calling for its withdrawal from the West Bank, including the illegal annexation of East Jerusalem, the Golan. Further UN Security Council Resolutions have also gone unheeded, including n. 2334 (2016), calling for the dismantlement of its settlements in "Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem", which constitute a "flagrant violation" of international humanitarian law and have "no legal validity". These resolutions implore Israel to stop settlement activities, dismantle the settlements, and fulfill its obligations as an occupying power under the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits an occupying power from transferring its population into the land it is occupying. Currently, more than 675,000 Israelis are living in contravention of these resolutions, in settlements across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The persistent, uneven application of international law should be a matter of the greatest urgency to governments around the world. As things stand, civil society fills the gap, expressing its concerns in ever sharper terms. Last month, Human Rights Watch issued a [report](#) denouncing Israel for apartheid and persecution.

As the cycle of violence increases, **IFOR takes heart from and highlights the value of nonviolent actions such as civil disobedience, boycott and non-collaboration**; we report, for instance, the courage of the young Israelis who refuse to serve in the military not to support the occupation<sup>7</sup> and the dockworkers refusing to load weapons onto ships bound for Israel not to support war.<sup>8</sup>

Many in Israeli civil society and Jewish communities around the world<sup>9</sup> denounce the human rights violations and support various nonviolent initiatives. We have also seen Palestinians running several nonviolent initiatives,<sup>10</sup> insisting on a peaceful solution, refusing to no longer accept the violence and the destruction caused by the ongoing conflict.

**IFOR calls on the governments in the region and around the world to assume their responsibility in upholding international law, contributing to a peaceful solution and considering the impact of their role in supplying weapons to the region, and thus backing armed confrontation and maintaining structural violence.**

**IFOR calls on the Member States of the UN Security Council and the entire international community to support peace negotiations under UN supervision and to ensure the implementation of International law and Justice, in Israel and Palestine.**

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.972mag.com/sixty-teens-israeli-army-objectors/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-palestine-arms-livorno-port-italy-b1848773.html>

<sup>9</sup> Including dozens of Jewish organizations such as B'Tselem, Jewish Voice for Peace, American Jews for a Just Peace, Gush Shalom, the New Israel Fund, the Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism, the orthodox Neturei Karta.

<sup>10</sup> Source X