

October 30th, 2023

## **Statement Regarding the Current War between Israel and Hamas**

By Israeli and Palestinian New Story Leadership Alumni

We are Palestinian and Israeli alumni of the New Story Leadership program. Each of us spent 7 weeks in DC, living, training, and working together in Congressional offices on Capitol Hill, advocating for human rights and justice for all. We are all strongly committed to moving forward together and have developed both a short and long-term vision of a path to peace and justice. We demand urgent actions to de-escalate this terrifying war, which threatens to destabilize the region with the cost of thousands of lives. We call on Congress and the Biden administration to:

- 1. Publicly call for an immediate ceasefire;**
- 2. Prioritize the protection of all civilians and secure the entrance of humanitarian aid into Gaza;**
- 3. Secure the release of Israeli women, children, and elderly hostages; and**
- 4. Hold all parties accountable for any violations of international law.**

We unequivocally condemn all violence against civilians, Israeli or Palestinian alike. We condemn the horrific attack by Hamas on Israeli civilians, including the murder of over 1,400 Israelis and the kidnapping of approximately 200 people, including women, elderly, and children. We consider this vicious attack as no less than a crime against humanity. Israeli civilians, Jews, Muslim and Christian alike, are continuously under attack by Hamas rocket fire.

Similarly, we condemn the ongoing attacks by the Israeli military on Gaza, devastating hospitals and infrastructure amongst others, which have already killed over 8,005 people, 3,324 of which are children. This severely violates international law.

The increasing humanitarian crisis in Gaza is bringing about the utter collapse of civilian life and infrastructure in Gaza. Essential supplies such as food, water, sanitation, and access to medical aid are at the point of complete exhaustion. This crisis is unfolding under constant bombardment by Israeli airstrikes leaving thousands of civilians wounded, dead, and over 1.4 million internally displaced.

The amount of human suffering and loss of life is staggering and incomprehensible. People we have come to know and love across the current divide are experiencing varying degrees of horror.

Now more than ever, it is crucial to remember that Hamas does not represent the people of Gaza, and that the people of Gaza are not Hamas. The collective punishment inflicted on the people of Gaza by the Israeli military is immoral, ineffective and will result in a new generation of extremists.

And finally, once the current violence has ceased, we demand that the core sources of this conflict be rigorously addressed, so that we no longer witness the repeat of history. A new paradigm must be established - one that recognizes the individual and collective human rights of all, and protects the right for self-determination of both people. The Israeli occupation of the Palestinian peoples must end. Palestinian human rights must be secured. The security of both Israel and Palestine must be ensured.

Stop the violence. End the conflict.

Demand a ceasefire.

Sincerely,

Israeli Alumni (Year)

- Eran Nissan (2019)
- Danielle Cumpston (2022)
- Odelya Mattar (2022)
- Noa Dotan (2023)
- Gali Alon (2023)

Palestinian Alumni (Year)

*Last name redacted for security reasons*

- Hamze (2014)
- Rawan (2017)
- Mais (2023)
- Husam (2023)
- Jessica (2023)