
Statement by humanitarian organisations, NGOs and UN organisations on the second anniversary of the Gaza blockade

Jerusalem, 17 June, 2009: We, United Nations and non-governmental humanitarian organisations, express deepening concern over Israel's continued blockade of the Gaza Strip which has now been in force for two years.

These indiscriminate sanctions are affecting the entire 1.5 million population of Gaza and ordinary women, children and the elderly are the first victims.

The amount of goods allowed into Gaza under the blockade is one quarter of the pre-blockade flow. Eight out of every ten truckloads contains food but even that is restricted to a mere 18 food items. Seedlings and calves are not allowed so Gaza's farmers cannot make up the nutritional shortfall. Even clothes and shoes, toys and school books are routinely prohibited.

Furthermore the suffocation of Gaza's economy has led to unprecedented unemployment and poverty rates and almost total aid dependency. While Gazans are being kept alive through humanitarian aid, ordinary civilians have lost all quality of life as they fight to survive.

The consequences of Israel's recent military operation remain widespread as early recovery materials have been prevented from entering Gaza. Thousands of people are living with holes in their walls, broken windows and no running water.

We call for free and uninhibited access for all humanitarian assistance in accordance with the international agreements and in accordance with universally recognised international human rights and humanitarian law standards. We also call for a return to normalized trade to enable the poverty and unemployment rates to decrease.

The blockade of the Gaza Strip is creating an atmosphere of deprivation in Gaza that can only deepen the sense of hopelessness and despair among people. The people of Gaza need to be shown an alternative of hope and dignity. Allowing human development and prosperity to take hold is an essential first step towards the establishment of lasting peace.

Signed By:

Action Against Hunger

Acted

Acsur-Las Segovias

American Friends of UNRWA

American Near East Refugee Aid

Asamblea de Cooperación por la Paz

Austcare

Biladi

CARE International West Bank and Gaza.

Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions

DanChurchAid

Defense for Children International

Enfants du Monde-Droits de l'Homme

International Relief Fund for the Afflicted and Needy - Canada

Japan International Volunteer Centre

Life Source

Medecins du Monde France

Medecins du Monde Spain

Medecins du Monde Switzerland

Medical Aid for Palestinians

Movement for Peace

Mujeres por la Paz y Acción Solidaria de Palestina

Norwegian People's Aid

Norwegian Refugee Council

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Oxfam International

Paz Ahora

Peace and Solidarity Haydée Santamaría, Cultural Association

Première Urgence

Relief International

Spanish Committee of UNHCR

Spanish Committee of UNRWA

Swedish Organization for Individual Relief

Terre des Hommes Italy

United Nations Development Fund for Women

United Nations Relief and Works Agency

War Child Holland

World Vision International