

## **Pressing for Peace**

Progress towards peace will require an inclusive process engaging all political actors and relevant stakeholders, including civil society, refugees, and women, in efforts to resolve the final status issues that have been at the heart of the conflict for decades. This is vital to secure a just and durable resolution to the conflict, in accordance with international law.

All Palestinian factions need to intensify their dialogue to pave the way for a reunified Palestinian government able to effectively provide for the needs of its civilian population.

Oxfam advocates for Palestinian and Israeli leaders, the leaders of all neighbouring states and the international community, to make every effort to meet their obligations and commitments under previous agreements.

**Oxfam believes that all people in the Middle East region should be free from violence, coercion, and deprivation.**

Ensuring the basic rights for ordinary women, men, and children is fundamental to the success of any peace process. Oxfam is against the use of violence against civilians in any form and calls on all parties to protect civilians from harm.

Israel has legitimate security concerns that can be addressed without compromising the rights of Palestinians under occupation. Israel, the Palestinian authorities and armed groups, have a responsibility to uphold international humanitarian and human rights law to protect civilians.

Israel has the right and duty to defend itself against indiscriminate rocket attacks against its civilian population. The current policy of blockade fails to provide Israel with increased security. Indeed, security of Israelis and Palestinians is indivisible: one depends on the other.

For Palestinians in Gaza, most aspects of their lives are characterised by insecurity of all kinds: military presence and attacks, loss of life and extra-judicial assassinations, loss of land, restrictions on movement, lack of drinking water, unemployment, and barriers to healthcare and education. For Israelis, the threat of attacks from suicide bombs, rockets, kidnapping, or other militant action is a constant source of insecurity.

## **The blockade of Gaza must be completely lifted**

Only a full opening of all crossings to people and goods, including exports will enable Palestinian civilians in Gaza to restore their economy and escape the poverty the blockade has entrenched. The international community must press Israel for the blockade to be fully lifted, rather than only eased.

Israel has the primary responsibility to end the blockade, whilst recognising that other actors and the international community must also play their part. The people of Gaza have suffered as a result of all parties, including neighbouring states and the international community failing to uphold their rights.

We condemn all indiscriminate rocket attacks on Israel from Gaza. The policy of blockade on the other hand, punishing the entire civilian population of Gaza for the acts of a few, is a collective punishment, which is unacceptable and violates international law. The blockade is also in breach of UN Security Council Resolution 1860.

## **Israel's settlement policy is causing poverty and suffering**

To comply with its obligations under international law and in line with the recommendations of the 2004 ICJ Advisory Opinion and without prejudice to the outcome of final status negotiations, the Government of Israel must: cease further settlement construction and expansion in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem; dismantle all existing settlement infrastructure; cancel all legislative and regulatory acts related to the settlements; make reparations for all damages caused by the settlements and provide the Israeli settler population with adequate alternative housing in Israel proper.

Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory pose a grave threat to efforts to achieve a durable and inclusive solution to the conflict, based on international law, including the two-state solution, which is the dominant framework that Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and the international community have accepted for political negotiations.

Settlements also significantly stunt the development of the Palestinian economy. Israeli settlements and the settler population under the protection of the Israeli army have confiscated Palestinian land for housing, roads, infrastructure and cultivation, as well as taken control of water. Many Palestinian farmers have been threatened or attacked by settlers, preventing them from farming their land or harvesting their olive trees. World leaders have repeatedly said that Israeli settlements are one of the main stumbling blocks standing in the way of progress on the peace process that ultimately, if it were to succeed, would benefit the lives and security of Palestinians and Israelis alike.

## **How does Oxfam work?**

Oxfam is a vibrant global movement of passionate, dedicated people fighting poverty and injustice together. People power drives everything we do. From saving lives and developing projects that put poor people in charge of their lives and livelihoods, to campaigning for change that lasts. That's Oxfam in action.

We work directly with partners, allies and communities and we seek to influence the powerful to ensure that poor people can improve their lives and livelihoods and have a say in decisions that affect them. We believe that respect for human rights will help lift people out of poverty.

In Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, Oxfam and its partners have responded to emergency situations by helping civilians in need. For example, during the Cast Lead operation, several Oxfam partners were involved in providing emergency health care to injured Palestinians in Gaza. Over the years, we have also undertaken development projects helping Palestinians and Israelis overcome discrimination and gain access to employment. We have worked with minorities in Israel to produce and sell textile products and are currently helping Palestinian olive farmers to better promote their products in order to gain access to local, regional and international markets.

With others, Oxfam also undertakes advocacy and campaigning as an essential part of our work, to ensure decision-makers change current unjust policies and practices that lead to poverty. Oxfam has worked with partners to produce a number of studies on the impact of the blockade on the lives of civilians in the Gaza Strip.