



World YWCA

## World YWCA and the YWCA of Palestine Statement

### United Nations International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People November 29, 2015

The World Young Women's Christian Association (World YWCA) and its member association, the YWCA of Palestine, join women and men around the world in observing the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

During the past year, violence has escalated tenfold in the Middle East. The prolonged military occupation of Palestine with its ongoing policies of colonialism, apartheid, genocide in Gaza, attacks on Al Aqsa Mosque, shoot to kill policies in Jerusalem, and now summary executions and punitive home demolitions have violated the Palestinian people's human rights, freedom of movement and religion, and sense of dignity, freedom, and security.

To date, hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced people, which Israel's war in Gaza has created, are still homeless. And humanitarian aid is still unable to address this problem.

UN Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Palestinian Occupied Territories, Makarim Wibisono, said, "Cases of excessive use of force by Israeli forces against Palestinians, including some which appear to amount to summary executions continue to be reported." Between Oct 1, 2015 and mid-November, 2015 alone, the death toll in Palestine has reached 85.

In addition, Israel has been conducting punitive home demolitions against those who are alleged to have committed terrorist attacks. This is meant to punish the whole family—a collective punishment that is strictly prohibited under international law. As of mid-November, 20 people, including eight children, have been rendered homeless by these home demolitions throughout the West Bank and occupied Jerusalem. In addition, around 400 children under the age of 16 are presently detained in Israeli prisons, facing humiliation, trauma and torture.

To add to these atrocities, Israeli forces have also targeted health care workers including the International Red Cross and Red Crescent. In one example, Israeli forces acting undercover, stormed a hospital in Hebron and killed a young man who had allegedly stabbed two settlers. Humanitarian law provides a special status for medical facilities. And this breach of humanitarian law was widely condemned by all including Doctors Without Borders.

#### **The World YWCA Call to Action to Institute Human Rights Standards and Implement UNSCR1325 in the Middle East Region**

The World YWCA's World Council recently passed a Call to Action to *Institute Human Rights Standards and Implement UNSCR1325 in the Middle East Region*. The Call to Action came as a response to this overwhelming new escalation of violence, which has created one of the biggest refugee crises since World War II.



World YWCA

The Resolution states clearly that “The unresolved and prolonged Arab/Israeli war is one of the underlying causes of the widespread violence and humanitarian crisis in the region, leading to further territorial fragmentation, creating thousands of refugees and forced displacements, some of who are being displaced for a second and third time, leaving a detrimental effect on women and children. In addition, by not addressing the Right of Return for Palestinian refugees, it is now adding to the global refugee crisis.”

As a global movement of 25 million women and girls working to advance the empowerment, leadership and rights of women, young women and girls in 120 countries around the world, we at the World WYCA stand strong in our belief that human rights and international law must be affirmed and protected for all. We support Palestine’s right to self determination as guaranteed in UN Resolutions 242 and 338. In addition we affirm the role of women in peace building and conflict resolution at all levels as protected in Security Resolution 1325. Lastly, we reconfirm our commitment to working for the Right of Return for refugees as protected in UN Resolutions 181 and 194.

We demand that all world leaders ensure these resolutions and international laws are implemented and enforced. In addition, we applaud the EU decision’s to label products from the settlements and to encourage other actions that put pressure on Israel to comply with human rights and international law.

Finally, we support Palestine in seeking international justice for possible war crimes committed in Gaza in 2014 and crimes against humanity in occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

On this special day, we call on all governments and civil society leaders to take every measure to:

- End the military occupation of the State of Palestine;
- End the siege of Gaza and support its reconstruction by holding Israel financially responsible;
- Stop the forced transfer of Bedouins from their lands;
- Support the Right of Return for Refugees or reparations;
- End settlement expansion and the annexation of East Jerusalem;
- Free all detainees held under administrative detention, especially women and children;
- Join the global boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement to put economic pressure on Israel until it respects international law.

Peace is not the absence of violence, but the presence of justice. We must continue to pursue, demand and enforce justice if we are going to have peace in Palestine and the Middle East. We stand in solidarity today with our sisters and brothers who are demanding nothing less than their full menu of rights, including freedom, dignity and security.

-ends-