Statement on the Israel-Gaza Crisis

The Global Student Forum, as the global voice of students worldwide, is gravely concerned by the devastating human suffering and destruction of educational institutions in the Middle East over the past few weeks. We send our unequivocal solidarity with all those affected by the escalating violence.

We condemn the atrocious attacks by Hamas against Israel, which resulted in the killing of over 1,400 innocent civilians, including children and learners, and demand all hostages to be immediately released. We also condemn the disproportionate and indistinct retaliation by Israel in the Gaza Strip (a territory where 50% of the population is under 15 years old) which has resulted in the killing of over 10,000 innocent civilians. We make a strong call for all parties to respect the Geneva and Hague Conventions, which clearly establish the international legal standards for humanitarian treatment in war.

We express special solidarity with all learners affected by this escalation of violence and strongly condemn attacks which result in the destruction of school, universities and educational institutions, such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the Al-Maghazi refugee camp. Education institutions must be protected at all times and military forces should refrain from targeting them, in line with the Safe Schools Declaration. GSF furthermore is concerned about the rise in anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim incidents on campuses around the world, given that anti-Semitic and islamophobic sentiments are increasing due to the ongoing conflict. Higher education institutions, public authorities and student service providers need to ensure the safety of Jewish and Muslim students. Free counseling services should be available for all those in need. Students have the right to a safe learning environment and thus need to be protected, both on campus and outside.

We make a critical call for an immediate ceasefire in the region. In order to prevent more loss of life, it is urgent to establish safe humanitarian corridors and to lift the current blockade on humanitarian supplies, including access to water, food and healthcare as a fundamental human right. Additionally, effective measures need to be put in place to counter those who have and continue to perpetuate violence, as this endangers any possibility of a path of reconciliation and peace in the region.

The Global Student Forum stands behind all those calling for, and working towards, an end to this spiraling cycle of violence and displacement. We call upon education institutions to be vocal in their support of human rights and take immediate action to support students affected by the crisis by any available means.

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