Joint PNGO-AIDA statement:
Gaza ceasefire a critical first step towards justice
20 January 2025

The Palestinian Non-Governmental Network (PNGO) and the Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA) jointly welcome the ceasefire deal in Gaza and the agreement to release Palestinian and Israeli civilian captives. Any cessation of violence is a critical first step toward alleviating civilian suffering.

However, it is imperative to highlight that what is urgently required is not just a temporary but an unconditional, permanent, and sustainable ceasefire that ensures long-term peace and security for all. We call for the immediate release of all individuals still in held arbitrary detention, including our humanitarian and healthcare colleagues from Gaza, too many of whom are reported to be held in inhumane conditions and subjected to torture, as well as denied basic rights by Israel such as access to the ICRC and legal representation.

For over 15 horrific months, political and military agendas in the region and around the world have obstructed efforts to secure the permanent ceasefire that millions of people globally have been calling for, prolonging relentless violence and avoidable civilian suffering. Over this period, the denial of humanitarian aid, including food, water, fuel and medical supplies, has been used as a weapon against civilians, in direct violation of the Geneva Conventions. As the occupying power, Israel is obligated under International Humanitarian Law (IHL) to facilitate safe and unimpeded humanitarian access at all times. However, NGOs consistently witnessed and reported on the denial of aid as a form of collective punishment for two million Palestinian civilians – half of them children. This will remain a stain on humanity and cannot be allowed to continue or occur again.

We call for the unimpeded flow and scale up of humanitarian assistance which needs to be led by Palestinians, including civil society and NGOs. We also call on neighboring countries to comply with their obligations under IHL to support these efforts and ensure crossings remain open. Displaced individuals must be allowed to return to their homes in all parts of the Gaza Strip to rebuild their lives in safety and dignity.

We also ask that the international community step up efforts to support Palestinians in need of medical evacuations outside of Gaza due to the sheer scale of damage to the health and humanitarian infrastructure. Facilitating evacuations, treatment, and safe return to Gaza is a step toward addressing the harm caused by a global failure to prevent this devastation.

Addressing the root causes of the conflict requires a sustained effort, including bringing an end to Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territory and the 17-year blockade on Gaza. For lasting peace to be possible, these measures must be implemented in line with the International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024.

This ceasefire in Gaza cannot serve as an excuse to escalate tensions or violence in the West Bank or elsewhere in the region. The international community must monitor and prevent any such developments with tangible action. Third States must fulfill their obligations under international law by halting the transfer of weapons and materials that fuel serious violations of international humanitarian law. They must ensure accountability through investigations, support international legal bodies, and establish an international mechanism to address ongoing violations. Ending impunity is crucial to breaking cycles of violence, for Palestinians, the region and all of humanity.

We call on all parties to the conflict and the guarantors to honor and ensure the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement. This ceasefire must only be the beginning of a crucial process toward justice, peace and dignity for all. Palestinian voices must be centred in all rebuilding negotiations for a meaningful solution to end the suffering of the Palestinian people. Continued attention, support, and solidarity are needed now more than ever to achieve lasting solutions and protect the rights of all affected communities.

The Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO)

The Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA)