

Embassy of Israel, Tokyo
3 Nibancho Chiyoda-ku

December 30th, 2008

H. E. Ambassador Nissim Ben-Shitrit
Israeli Ambassador to Japan

Re: Call to stop military attacks on Gaza

We, the undersigned organizations who have been involved in humanitarian aid and development activities in the Gaza Strip, Palestine, are extremely shocked by the military attacks on Gaza that began on December 27th, 2008, and are deeply concerned about the worsening situation. According to the media, by December 29th, there had been over 300 deaths and 1400 casualties. We fear that the number of victims will rise as the attacks continue. In addition, it has been reported that the victims include women and children civilians, who make up more than half the population of Gaza. We strongly believe that regardless of the reason, these acts of inhumanely victimizing innocent civilians warrant severe criticism.

Due to the effects of long-term Israeli blockades, the people of Gaza have suffered from a shortage of basic essentials such as food, medical supplies, electricity, water and gas. Furthermore, they have been denied their right to live with dignity. Many children have suffered from malnutrition, and hospitals and clinics have been in a state of near-paralysis due to a constant lack of medical supplies. Given these circumstances, this most recent large-scale attack has imposed massive physical and psychological damage on the people of Gaza. If military attacks continue, we are deeply concerned that there will be a severe increase in civilian deaths and casualties, and at a time of shortage like this, people will have increasingly fewer opportunities to receive adequate medical treatment.

We believe that military attacks on civilians are unacceptable under any and all circumstances. For this reason, we believe that the rocket attacks made indiscriminately by Hamas, along with the large-scale military attacks made by the Israeli government victimizing civilians should be criticized equally. We believe that the military attacks made by the Israeli military forces have exceeding retaliatory nature, and lack justification as the great number of civilian deaths reveal. Additionally, this type of attack further distances a peaceful solution to the conflict. We demand that the attacks to be stopped immediately.

The people of Gaza need to be able to have free access to supplies, to move freely, to live without relying on international support, to develop their own economy, and to live with dignity. These are also preconditions for a peaceful solution to the conflict. However unfortunately, the humanitarian and development aid from our organizations and international society as a whole have been met with difficulties, or in the worst cases completely blocked. This has led to the spread of deep despair among the people of Gaza.

For the above reasons, we demand that the Israeli Government immediately stop the military attacks on Gaza victimizing civilians, and allow injured and ill persons to receive medical treatment in Israel. We also demand medical supplies and food provisions to Gaza, and free entrance and departure access to the region for humanitarian aid organizations.

ayus : Network of Buddhist Volunteers on International Cooperation
(Specified non-profit organization)
Amnesty International Japan (Aggregate Corporation)
Japan Forum for Biodiversity
Japan International Volunteer Center (Specified non-profit organization)
Nipponzan Myohoji Temple
Japan Palestine Medical Association
YWCA of Japan
The Campaign for the Children of Palestine
(Specified non-profit organization)
Japanese Committee for the Children of Palestine
Peace Boat
Religious Persons Net for Bringing Peace
“1 Frame” Supporters