

December 5, 2023

Yellowknife Citizens for Ceasefire

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Dear Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories,

I am writing to you on behalf of Yellowknife Citizens for Ceasefire, a grassroots organization with over 160 members who formed in the wake of the Israel's invasion of Gaza which has, according to UN Secretary General António Guterres, turned into "a graveyard for children."¹ As a group concerned members of the NWT community, we are seeking leadership and a commitment to human rights on this issue from our elected representatives.

While acknowledging the horrors of the attack on Israel's civilian population of October 7th, we are horrified by Israel's disproportionate armed response, which includes the "indiscriminate killing of civilians." Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has asserted that Canada has failed its obligation to uphold International Humanitarian Law. By refusing to call for a permanent ceasefire, our country has failed to intervene while "Israel indiscriminately kills civilians, destroys essential infrastructure, [and] withholds essential items including water and medicine."² According to Euro-Med Humans Rights Monitor³ and UN statistics,⁴ in just 50 days, Israel's military campaign has killed over 14 times the amount of children killed by Russian during their 2 year long invasion of Ukraine. As the temporary November 24th to November 30th, 2023 truce ended, this number continues to rise and there is no expected end in sight to the conflict and the continued violent displacement and killing of entire Palestinian families.

We as YK Citizens for Ceasefire are humbly requesting that the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories consider joining the premier of Yukon and express to our Canadian Prime Minister that the people of the NWT insist Canada uphold International Human Rights law by openly calling for:

¹ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Gaza: UN experts call on international community to prevent genocide against the Palestinian people." 16 November 2023. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/11/gaza-un-experts-call-international-community-prevent-genocide-against>

² Joseph Belliveau, "MSF open letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau: Canada must call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza," published Nov 9, 2023. Updated: Nov 23, 2023. Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières. <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.ca/canada-must-call-immediate-ceasefire-gaza/>

³ Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, "Statistics on the Israeli genocide in the Gaza Strip (07 October - 24 November 2023)," 25 November 2023. <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/5981/Statistics-on-the-Israeli-Genocide-in-the-Gaza-Strip-%2807-October---24-November-2023%29>

⁴ United Nations Ukraine, "Civilian deaths in Ukraine War top 10,000, UN says in Ukraine" 21 November 2023. <https://ukraine.un.org/en/253322-civilian-deaths-ukraine-war-top-10000-un-says>

(1) a permanent ceasefire;

(2) the restoration of services to the region—including electricity, water, and internet; and,

(3) free passage of humanitarian aid where it is needed in Gaza.

To the end of calling for a resolution, we have attached a sample resolution that could be considered in this important and vital process. There is no time when upholding International Humanitarian Law is not important and during this time of crises it will never be more important. It is our sincere and earnest hope that our call will be heard and acted upon.

Sincerely,

Derek Lindman
Spokesperson,
Yellowknife Citizens for Ceasefire

Sample Ceasefire Resolution for Authors: Derek Lindman, Yellowknife Citizens for Ceasefire

WHEREAS,

The United Nations (UN) have cited, “at least 15,523 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza [...] with 70 per cent believed to be women and children. Many more are missing, presumably under the rubble, waiting for rescue or recovery,”¹ and,

WHEREAS,

World Health Organization (WHO) spokesperson stated, “Eventually we will see more people dying from disease than we are even seeing from the bombardment if we are not able to put back (together) this health system;”² and,

WHEREAS,

Medicine Sans Frontiers describes Israel’s control of aid as a “brazen and repeated violation of International Human Law;”³ and,

WHEREAS,

Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesman for the UN Secretary-General states “there are no safe places in Gaza. [...] We have seen, since the beginning of this conflict, that those places that fly the UN flag are not safe either;”⁴ and,

WHEREAS,

James Elder, Spokesperson for UNICEF stated, “The humanitarian situation in Gaza is so perilous that anything other than sustained peace and at scale emergency aid will mean catastrophe for the children of Gaza. [...] A lasting ceasefire must therefore be implemented. The alternative is unthinkable for people already living in a nightmare. Inaction, at its core, is an approval of the killing of children;”⁵ and,

WHEREAS,

A ceasefire prioritizes the safety and return of Israeli hostages according to surviving⁶ and returned hostages;⁷ and,

WHEREAS,

¹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/12/1144387>

² <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/more-people-risk-death-disease-than-bombings-gaza-who-2023-11-28/>

³ Beliveau, Joseph. (2023, November 23). *Canada must call for immediate ceasefire in Gaza*. Doctors Without Borders / Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF ... <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.ca/canada-must-call-immediate-ceasefire-gaza/>

⁴ <https://press.un.org/en/2023/db231205.doc.htm>

⁵ <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/war-children-resumes-geneva-palais-briefing-note>

⁶ <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/rkqi3ypsa>

⁷ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-05/ty-article/.premium/freed-hostages-tell-war-cabinet-that-hamas-held-captives-suffered-hunger-sexual-assault/0000018c-3abd-dc03-a9ec-3eff69c0000>

the Yukon Premier has released a call for a ceasefire;⁸ and,

WHEREAS,

The UNW⁹ and PSAC¹⁰ have called for a ceasefire; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED:

THAT the Premier write a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mélanie Joly and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations Bob Rae, to request that the Federal Government call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza; the restoration of basic services including food, water, power, fuel, communications, and medical services to the population of Gaza; unhindered access for humanitarian aid; and the release of all hostages;

THAT the Premier and Members of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly condemn all acts of anti-semitism, anti-Palestinian racism and Islamophobia in our territory, and will work to ensure that the Northwest Territories is just, safe and welcoming for all; and

THAT Federal MP McLeod, receive a copy of the letter.

⁸ <https://yukon.ca/en/news/statement-premier-pillai-israel-hamas-conflict>

⁹ *Canadian labour joins the call for urgent ceasefire in Gaza*. Canadian Labour joins the call for urgent ceasefire in Gaza | Union of Northern Workers. (2023, November 9). <https://unw.ca/news-updates/canadian-labour-joins-call-urgent-ceasefire-gaza>

¹⁰ *PSAC joins coalition calling for urgent ceasefire in Israel-palestine conflict*. Public Service Alliance of Canada. (n.d.-a). <https://psacunion.ca/psac-joins-coalition-calling-urgent-ceasefire>