

Human Rights Center in North America

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October 19, 2023

The Right Honorable Joe Biden,
The President of the United States of America
The White House
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20500

Subject: the massacres of civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: the United States of America must demand respect for international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians, which includes demanding that Israel lift the illegal and inhumane blockade from the Gaza Strip.

Dear President Biden,

The Center for Human Rights in North America has been following the atrocities in the occupied Palestinian territories since the beginning of the year and particularly since October 7, 2023, and it is with the greatest concern that we write to you today.

We are alarmed by the unprecedented scale of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law committed mainly by the extremist Israeli government and which generates the reaction of Palestinians who defend themselves with the means at hand. This is a true humanitarian disaster. Under international humanitarian law, all parties to a conflict have a clear obligation to protect the lives of civilians caught up in hostilities, and we consider that your government is acting unfairly towards the conflict by fully supporting the occupying forces and we are very shocked by your position regarding the shelling of the Gaza hospital on October 17, 2023, thus generating more than 500 patients and civilians.

You know that since October 8, 2023, the Israeli army, with your support, has bombarded Gaza at an unprecedented rate, leaving at least 3,300 dead and more than 9,000 injured. A mass exodus is underway in the northern Gaza Strip. Most of Gaza's civilians are descendants of more than 750,000 Palestinians displaced or forced to flee their homes in 1948, also known as the Nakba. History repeats itself and risks exacerbating this cycle of violence which has lasted for almost two decades in the face of a new attempt to uproot the Palestinian people from the Gaza Strip.

International organizations have also verified evidence of the Israeli military's use of white phosphorous artillery shells in densely populated civilian areas of Gaza, which are considered illegal and indiscriminate attacks. White phosphorus is an incendiary weapon within the meaning of Protocol III of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons and poses a high risk of excruciating burns and lifelong suffering when used in civilian areas.

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Israel's shutdown of Gaza's only power plant has exacerbated an already desperate humanitarian crisis. Water, food and access to essential services are lacking in Gaza's hospitals, which are already struggling to cope with the influx of wounded. This situation seriously endangers the lives of hospitalized people, particularly those in intensive care, or suffering from chronic illnesses, as well as newborns who depend on respiratory assistance. Which amounts to collective punishment.

Inexplicably, the United States of America has yet to denounce Israel's indiscriminate airstrikes, total blockade and imminent forced displacement of more than two million civilians in the Gaza Strip. The North American Human Rights Center urges your government to:

- **Condemn the attack on the Gaza hospital which caused more than 500 deaths on October 17, 2023**
- **Urge both parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law and prioritize the protection of civilian lives, and to end indiscriminate attacks on civilian infrastructure and killings of civilians.**
- **Publicly and unequivocally urge Israeli authorities to immediately rescind the “evacuation” order.**
- **Negotiate and secure access for humanitarian assistance – medical supplies, food, drinking water and other essentials for survival and gender equality – throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territories, without obstruction.**
- **Use all diplomatic efforts at its disposal to address the root causes of repeated cycles of violence and end Israel's illegal blockade of Gaza, which has lasted for more than 16 years, and the system of apartheid imposed by Israel to all Palestinians.**

Mr. President, you have a duty, on behalf of all Americans, to respect the United States' international human rights commitments and to demand that Israel respect these same obligations.

In this critical hour, we urge you to place yourself on the right side of history, at least once, and unequivocally use your government's voice and influence to protect the most vulnerable.

Mr Belaid Elbousky
President of the Center