

CVT Calls for End to Violence in Gaza

ST. PAUL, Minn. — The Center for Victims of Torture™ (CVT) today issued this statement as violence in Gaza escalates.

“The number of civilian deaths and injuries, particularly in the Gaza Strip, continues to soar, with the killing of well over 200 Palestinians, including over 60 children. The largescale destruction of civilian infrastructure continues, including homes, health and media facilities.

“Violations of international humanitarian law and possible war crimes are being committed and we must not remain silent; these violations are inflicting and will continue to inflict profound trauma upon individuals, families and communities—and the traumas have caused, and will continue to cause, intergenerational and historical cycles of suffering. As we have learned through our years of healing, the impacts of individual, family and social harms erect complex and enduring barriers to peace and justice. CVT’s long experience working with populations affected by cycles of violence and suffering also shows that, left untreated, such trauma often leads to lasting psychological wounds, particularly among children.

“Hundreds upon hundreds of Israeli airstrikes are being carried out in one of the world’s most densely populated areas. As international, Israeli and Palestinian human rights groups have noted, many targets cannot be considered legitimate military targets. Israel’s blockade of Gaza, now in its 14th year, prevents civilians from fleeing and, as there are no bomb shelters there, they have no place to go for protection while being exposed to near constant bombardment. In addition, Palestinian armed groups have fired thousands of rockets indiscriminately at the civilian population in Israel which has resulted in the deaths of twelve people in Israel, including two children, as well as destruction of homes and civilian property. While there is no symmetry in the scale of violence, these rocket attacks also violate international humanitarian law, and the trauma to civilians these attacks cause is devastating.

“Our hearts are with our CVT teams in Jordan, who are experiencing the anxiety and pain caused by the conflict, as well as fear for family and loved ones in the region. We add our voice to the growing chorus in the international community calling for an immediate halt to acts which result in violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.” -Curt Goering, CVT executive director

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The Center for Victims of Torture is a nonprofit organization headquartered in St. Paul, MN, with offices in Atlanta, GA, and Washington, D.C.; and healing initiatives in Africa and the Middle East. Visit www.cvt.org