

11 February 2024

**Mr. Karim Khan KC
Office of the Prosecutor
International Criminal Court**

Request for Urgent Preemptive Statement on the Situation in Rafah

Dear Mr. Khan,

We, representing various Palestinian human rights organizations and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), alongside the undersigned National Human Rights Institution, are reaching out to you with an urgent plea for your attention and intervention concerning the recent Israeli threats to invade Rafah, the southernmost area of the Gaza Strip. With a population of approximately 280,000 people before the war, Rafah has become a last refuge for approximately 1.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) who are currently facing severe shortages of food, water, shelter, and medical supplies.

The threats of an Israeli incursion into Rafah have raised grave concerns about the potential for a humanitarian catastrophe in an area already serving as a critical sanctuary. The United Nations Secretary-General has warned that expanding the scope of hostilities to Rafah would significantly exacerbate an already dire humanitarian nightmare, with countless regional repercussions.

Furthermore, the forced displacement of the population toward Rafah and the escalation of bombings raise the potential for forcing over 1.3 million people into involuntary migration toward Egypt. Such actions could result in massacres or forced displacements, further destabilizing the region.

In light of these pressing circumstances, we kindly request that your esteemed office promptly investigates these actions and threats and issues a public statement on the matter. The people of Gaza urgently need international intervention and support. A clear stance from the International Criminal Court would not only demonstrate global solidarity but also send a potent message that such actions will face scrutiny and potential accountability.

We believe in the International Criminal Court's crucial role in ensuring justice and accountability in this critical situation. Your prompt attention to and action on this matter would be immensely appreciated and could help avert further escalation of this humanitarian crisis.

Sincerely,

The National Human Rights Institution in Palestine

1. Palestine Independent Commission for Human Rights (PHROC Observer Member)

Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council (PHROC)

2. Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association (West Bank)
3. Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association (Gaza)
4. Al Mezan Center for Human Rights
5. Al-Haq, Law in the Service of Man

6. Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights "Hurriyat"
7. Defense for Children International – Palestine
8. Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center
9. Muwatin Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (Observer Member)
10. Palestinian Centre for Human Rights

Civil Society Organizations:

11. Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO) – A coalition of 132 Palestinian civil society organizations
12. The Palestinian Youth Association for Leadership and Rights Activation (PYALARA)
13. The Palestinian Association for Empowerment and Local Development (REFORM)
14. The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy - MIFTAH
15. A.M. Qattan Foundation
16. AMAN: Coalition for Accountability and Integrity
17. The Civil Commission for the Independence of Judiciary and Rule of Law (ISTIQLAL)
18. Filastiniyat
19. Union of Palestinian Women Committees UPWC
20. Arab World Democracy and Electoral Monitor (AlMarsad)
21. Faisal Hussein Foundation
22. Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling WCLAC
23. MUSAWA- The Palestinian Center for the Independence of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession
24. Bisan Center for Research and Development
25. The Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA)
26. Women's Studies Centre
27. Sharek youth Forum
28. Women's Affairs Technical Committee
29. Teacher Creativity Center
30. Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC)
31. Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS"