



Dear IASSW colleagues

Palestine has once again become the central issue in international politics. Since May, we have seen violent attacks by Israeli forces on worshippers in the Al-Aqsa Mosque during the month of Ramadan; the attempted eviction of Palestinians from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of Jerusalem; vicious pogroms by far-right Jewish settlers in Jerusalem and in Israeli towns; brutal policing which has seen demonstrators shot dead; and an aerial bombardment of Gaza which has killed at least 248 Palestinians (including 61 children), and injured thousands more. According to the UN, over 38,000 Palestinians have been internally displaced by the recent violence and are seeking protection in 48 UNRWA schools across Gaza, while over 2,500 people have been made homeless due to the destruction of their homes. Ten Israelis are also reported to have died as a result of missiles fired from Gaza.

Medical Aid for Palestine reports that Israeli airstrikes have damaged or destroyed water and electricity infrastructure, medical facilities including a primary health centre which provides Covid-19 testing and vaccinations, and targeted roads to two main hospitals in Gaza, restricting access for emergency services. Health professionals have reportedly been killed. The targeting of a refugee camp in Gaza, which killed 10 members of one family, has been condemned by the UN secretary general.

The UN has acknowledged that the recent violence is linked to the planned evictions of Palestinian families from Sheikh Jarrah and systematic violations of Palestinian rights.

In response to these events, however, there has been resistance by Palestinians on a scale not seen for many years not only in Gaza and the West Bank but also within Israeli towns. That has included a well-supported General Strike called by the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions and a thousands-strong demonstration of Jews and Arabs in Tel Aviv opposed to the brutal policies of the Netanyahu Government. Globally we have seen some of the largest demonstrations in solidarity with the Palestinians for many years, including a demonstration of 180,000 in London.

As social work academics affiliated to the Social Work Action-International, we do not believe that the global social work profession and its organisations can remain silent in the face of such brutal repression and oppression. It is incumbent on us as social workers opposed to all forms of oppression to join our voices with solidarity movements around the world who are seeking to put pressure on their governments to stop supporting Israel politically, to stop funding and arming it and to demand justice for Palestine. We therefore call on the IASSW to issue a clear statement expressing solidarity with the Palestinian people and with our Palestinian social work colleagues and calling for an end to the illegal occupation of Palestinian territories (including the illegal annexation of East Jerusalem) and

to the ongoing systematic discrimination faced by Palestinians in Jerusalem and the occupied territories.

In solidarity

SWAN-I Steering committee

7th June 2021