

## **Statement by CONCORD members**

In light of the alarming escalation of violence in Gaza and across the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), we join the international call for **respect for human rights and international humanitarian law and an end to violence against civilian populations on all sides**. The European Union needs to uphold its own standing values of human dignity and human rights to stop the ongoing violence and suffering. Since the 7<sup>th</sup> of October more than 10,000 Palestinians, including 4100 children, have been killed by Israeli bombing in Gaza, and 1,400 Israelis were killed by Hamas attacks.

Many international and local organisations funded by the EU have been working in the oPt alongside children, young people, women and men to support Palestinians to meet their basic needs, but also to ensure the development of a just and more equal society. As organisations working for sustainable development, social justice and equality, we are appalled by the unfathomable loss of life, destruction and suffering on all sides of the conflict.

We call for EU leaders to take a proactive approach to ensure:

**An immediate ceasefire to protect the lives of innocent civilians.** The ceasefire should be accompanied by the immediate freeing of all civilian hostages and should facilitate provision of humanitarian aid including food, water, medical supplies, fuel, and electricity, to address the most critical needs of the population. Calling for “humanitarian pauses” as was agreed at the European Council of 26 October 2023 is insufficient to prevent senseless death and destruction.

**Respect of international human rights and humanitarian law by all parties involved.** Those responsible for their breach should be held to account and proactive measures should be taken to ensure that human rights are upheld in both West Bank and Gaza. As part of this effort, the EU should actively engage within the framework of the UN resolutions related to the oPt.

**The root causes of the crisis are addressed, including an end to the blockade.** The decades-long erosion of basic services, employment opportunities and social safety nets has already led to deep poverty and economic crisis in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza. While meeting immediate humanitarian needs, the EU must also advocate for and assist the people of oPt to rebuild their communities and make a better life for themselves.

The current situation is leading to a human-made disaster, on top of a protracted crisis, where the level of poverty and need of humanitarian assistance will only increase. The EU must step up and provide strong, united leadership to help avert even further escalation, loss of lives, violations of rights, and desperate poverty and hardship.