



## Statement on violence in Palestine and Israel

Tuesday 7 November, 2023

*This is an updated statement on the heightened violence in Palestine and Israel- read our previous statement [here](#).*

GAPS demands an immediate and full ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and Occupied Palestinian Territories and stands in solidarity with the Palestinian people who continue to resist Israel's settler colonial regime. Violence will not stop until the occupation ends and accountability is ensured. Over 8,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli military action in the past weeks, which survivors across the world have pointed out recalls the events of past mass atrocity crimes of which many reached the threshold of genocide. As per our commitments as feminists, we must recognise the gendered implications of such colonial violence and call out the international community for its failure to act decisively in the face of these atrocities.

As a UK-based network, we urge the UK government to immediately leverage its diplomatic force to halt the violence and Israeli military action in Gaza, condemn the expansion of illegal settlements in the West Bank which itself is experiencing a rapid rise in violence against Palestinians and support the work of the International Criminal Court in ensuring justice for the war crimes that have taken place.

GAPS calls upon friends and colleagues to *act* upon their commitments as feminists and advocate for an immediate and full ceasefire. The Women, Peace and Security agenda was created to respond to the disproportionate and specific impact of violence upon women and girls and promote women's equal and meaningful participation in peace processes. This includes Palestinian women and girls. Yet, organisations and states that have expressed support for this agenda have been silent or actively complicit in the violence against Palestinians, demonstrating how often the nature of feminist commitments are performative and instrumentalised. This hypocrisy has been highlighted during the past weeks' events on Women, Peace and Security, such as the UN Security Council's Open Debate, where member states expressed their support for women's rights whilst continuing to trade billions of dollars' worth of arms used to commit human rights violations and maintain the illegal occupation of Palestine, and refused to condemn the war crimes and collective punishment being perpetrated by Israel.

In 2018, our partners from [Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counselling](#) addressed the UNSC at the WPS open debate on the gender-specific consequences of Israel's occupation of Palestine, pointing to how Palestinian women disproportionately endure violence and reinforced patriarchal structures in society directly due to the occupation. This was demonstrated through the high levels of unemployment and economic deprivation faced by women in the Occupied Palestinian Territories which leaves them further vulnerable to violence. Five years later, this statement remains just as applicable as the Security Council continues to fail its mandate to secure peace and security for all Palestinians, in Gaza, Israel and the West Bank. As a network on Women, Peace and Security, our core aim is to highlight the experiences of women and girls, in all their intersecting identities, but it is important to recognise that this violence impacts all Palestinians, including men and boys, who face distinct

struggles on top of the general harm inflicted on Palestinians by Israel and which are shaped by racialised and patriarchal norms.

The Security General's 2022 Women, Peace and Security [report](#) drew attention to the relationship between sales of arms and heightened vulnerabilities of women and girls to gender-based violence, urging States to assess the gendered impacts before authorising the export of arms – a call which has been long-ignored by member states. This hypocrisy was encapsulated by the delay of the afternoon session of the Open Debate for two draft resolutions to be voted on and ultimately denied — whether to implement a 'humanitarian pause', as described in the US resolution, or a 'ceasefire', as described by Russia (whose support for Palestine is wholly undermined by its continual occupation of Ukraine). For the Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security to be delayed for this horrifying disregard of Palestinian women's and human rights, the failings of the Security Council are as explicit as ever. The three other resolutions drafted on October 16, October 17 and October 27 have prioritised a 'humanitarian ceasefire'. The UK notably voted against and abstained from the first two draft resolutions due to the exclusion of Israel's right to self-defence. The blanket support for Israel continued during the voting for the UN General Assembly's recently successful resolution on October 27 which called for an immediate humanitarian truce between Israel and Hamas to permit access for humanitarian aid. The UK abstained from voting due to ['the draft's omission of an unequivocal condemnation of Hamas' terrorist attacks'](#). This is a clear failure of the UK government to prioritise immediate action to protect further violence against the Palestinian people amidst an occupation that has facilitated such atrocities to occur.

At GAPS we are unapologetically vocal and challenge those who remain silent — this silence means complicity to the crimes against humanity committed against Palestinians. As a penholder of Women, Peace and Security and the protection of civilians, the UK government must act now to end the violent occupation of Palestine.

**Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) Secretariat**