

WISCONSIN INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES (WIPCS) STATEMENT:

**PEACE STUDIES SCHOLARS CALL FOR A
HUMANITARIAN CEASEFIRE IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

Wisconsin, November 10, 2023

We, faculty members who teach about and carry out research in peace studies, join our voices with many around the world and across the United States who are calling for an immediate ceasefire in hostilities between Israel and Hamas. In doing so, we affirm the right to life of innocent civilians, who are overwhelmingly the victims of the violence in this most recent round of conflict that began with Hamas's brutal attack on October 7 and which has been followed by Israel's unrelenting and indiscriminate bombardment and complete siege of the Gaza strip. We note that UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, has expressed deep concern at "the clear violations of international humanitarian law," and in [remarks to the UN Security Council](#) asserted: "But the grievances of the Palestinian people cannot justify the appalling attacks by Hamas. And those appalling attacks cannot justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people. Excellencies, even war has rules."

We mourn the thousands of children murdered in this latest and terrible round of violence. The statistics are horrifying. Children make up over 40% of the more than 10,000 killed by Israeli airstrikes since October 7th with one child being killed approximately every fifteen minutes. According to [Save the Children](#), as of October 29 "more than 3,257 children have been reported killed, including at least [3,195](#) in Gaza, [33](#) in the West Bank, and [29](#) in Israel, according to the Ministries of Health in Gaza and Israel respectively. The number of children reported killed in just three weeks in Gaza is more than the number killed in armed conflict globally—across more than 20 countries—over the course of a whole year, for the last three years." We are alarmed and heartbroken about this immeasurable loss of innocent life as well as the tens of thousands who have been injured.

Gandhi, King, and numerous other advocates of social justice, peace, and nonviolence have taught us that violence will never bring about peace, instead violence only begets more violence. As Gandhi famously said, "an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind."

The Israeli/Palestinian conflict, as expressed in the titles of many books, is fundamentally about one land and two peoples, and the need for equality, safety, mutual respect, and justice. All parties must realize that neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians are going to leave or simply disappear. Neither can they be killed off, nor should they be forcibly scattered. Instead, both sides as well as world leaders must work to develop a solution that resolves the longstanding causes of this conflict by addressing Palestinian demands for land, freedom, and statehood, as well as Israel's security concerns. Instead of sending more weapons to Israel, the United States must ensure that its actions uphold the safety and dignity of the peoples on both sides of this conflict and champion a nonviolent path to peace with justice.

Furthermore, as peace scholars, we know that the single largest beneficiary of the current war is not and will not be any group of people, but rather the arms industry and the military industrial complex. Ten billion dollars' worth of weapons have already made their way to that troubled

land. More bombs, including banned phosphorus bombs, were dropped in one day on Gaza, a place somewhat larger than the city of Milwaukee but smaller than Chicago, than were dropped in a week on the entire country of Afghanistan. President Biden is now requesting funds for billions more in arms. These weapons have no other use than to kill and destroy individuals, families, communities, and their environments. The profound trauma experienced by survivors will persist for generations. The U.S.'s enablement of Israel's indiscriminate use of these weapons only serves to further erode the United States' position on the global stage.

Affirming life and respect for human rights, *we call on people of good faith to contact our representatives and the White House and demand that our government use its considerable power and influence to ensure an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, an end to the blockade of Gaza, the freeing of all hostages, and eventually the convening of multilateral UN-led peace talks to work towards a sustainable peace. War is not the answer!*