



Sahabat Alam Malaysia
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For Environmental Justice

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Letter To The Editor

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Stop the genocide in Palestine!

Sahabat Alam Malaysia is a member of Friends of the Earth International (FoEI) and we support the following statement released by Friends of the Asia Pacific in solidarity with our sister organisation Palestinian Environmental NGOs Network (PENGON)/Friends of the Earth Palestine, who have lost staff, family members and friends as well as their offices in Gaza over the last 10 weeks of assault by Israel.

We are devastated with the ongoing war in Palestine, especially in Gaza. Despite the large majority voting for an immediate ceasefire during the recent UN Emergency session, those that hold the veto power in the Security Council are calling the shots and are not halting the horrible war crimes and humanitarian disaster.

The rest of us are spectators in this warfare watching with horror as the brutality continues. This must stop and no country should condone this act of violence and terror.

We support the efforts of the Malaysian Prime Minister in calling out the western powers especially the United States to halt this on-going genocide and urge the Malaysian government to continue its efforts in seeking to end these barbaric acts.

Below is our collective call with Friends of the Earth Asia Pacific.

Internationalist Solidarity with PENGON

Friends of the Earth Asia Pacific stands firmly in solidarity with our colleagues at PENGON/Friends of the Earth Palestine as they face a catastrophic environmental and humanitarian situation in Gaza and the West Bank.

In the last ten weeks, the extensive assault on Gaza, including the indiscriminate Israeli bombardment, has led to the destruction of about 260,000 housing units, representing 60% of housing in the Gaza Strip. Infrastructure, including roads, water and sewage systems, and electricity networks have also been destroyed. 1.9 million Palestinians have been displaced, more than two thirds of the population, with many displaced seeking safety more than once.

We are devastated to inform you that Israeli airstrikes have killed five of PENGON's dear colleagues from UWAC (Union of Agricultural Work Committees), PARC (Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees), and Maan Development Centre. Hundreds of relatives of PENGON members' staff have also been killed. 80% of PENGON team members have been forcibly displaced. The majority have been displaced more than three times looking for a safe place. In fact, there is no safe place to seek refuge in Gaza. 70% of their houses have been either partially damaged or completely destroyed.

All PENGON members' offices have been damaged during this assault. As a result of the siege on Gaza, food, water, hygiene and medical supplies are running out. PENGON, as an institution, is trying its best to source these supplies, but shortages and road blockades are making it impossible to facilitate urgent humanitarian help.

Our colleagues and their families are suffering from poor health due to the spread of disease coming from unburied dead bodies, accumulation of waste and no access to clean drinkable water.

Environmental Impacts of the war

Israeli military actions attacking agricultural land and infrastructure and contaminating agricultural land is denying Gazans food sovereignty, and is part of the use of starvation as a weapon of war, according to Human Rights Watch.

There have been reports of agricultural facilities, bakeries and grain mills being destroyed. The bombardment, displacement of farmers and water shortages have made farming nearly impossible; livestock across Gaza are facing starvation and having to be killed, crops are being abandoned.

Israel's ground offensive involved the razing of agricultural land and infrastructure, including orchards and greenhouses in Northern Gaza. Further, Israel has reportedly used white phosphorus, potentially contaminating soil for years to come.

The Palestine Food Security Sector, led by the WFP (World Food Program) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation are now reporting that over a third of agricultural land has been damaged by Israeli military actions.

Damage from the bombardment and ground offensive, recent flooding events and the cutting off of drinking water supplies from Israel has resulted in the children of Gaza having no access to 90 percent of their normal water use. Dehydration and waterborne diseases such as cholera and diarrhea now threaten the survival of people across Gaza, in particular children for whom diarrhea and dehydration are particularly lethal.

Friends of the Earth Asia Pacific urges every Government to step up and demand for an immediate ceasefire and that all borders are opened up to allow for humanitarian support to flow to the people of Gaza on an urgent basis.

Friends of the Earth Asia Pacific further calls on all our member groups, allies, and people of conscience to:

- Continue to speak up for Palestine, in the media, through political actions and by mobilising their membership
- Continue to demand an immediate ceasefire, including lobbying government agencies to demand a ceasefire through the UN
- Demand the opening of borders to allow for humanitarian support to the people of Gaza
- Donate to the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC), members of PENGON, in Palestine's international relief campaign <https://stopgazastarvation.org/>

This siege must end now.

Meenakshi Raman

President

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (Friends of the Earth Malaysia)