



الائتلاف الوطني للنداء العالمي لمكافحة الفقر - فلسطين

## National Coalition for the Global Call to Action against Poverty – Palestine

For Immediate Release

Sunday 1\6\2008

Ramallah- Occupied Palestine

### Open letter to the High-Level Conference On the “World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy” 3-5/6/2008 Rome, Italy

To:

The conference organizers: **FAO, CGIAR, IFAD, WFP;**

The Heads of States;

The General Secretary of the United Nations.

**Bear responsibility to protect the Palestinian people who are exposed to  
poverty and hunger by the Israeli occupying forces**

Your organizations' reports and a number of your governments have more than once referred to the dire situation that the Palestinian people have arrived at as a result of daily subjugation by the Israeli military, which has resulted in the impoverishment and starvation of the Palestinian people. Your reports have called on Israel to halt these practices in the occupied Palestinian territories, indicating that any sustainable development in the territories will be gravely compromised by Israeli policies. There has been a recent increase in the number of checkpoints in the West Bank, and an increase of daily closures in the Gaza Strip. This has exacerbated the levels of poverty and unemployment, and decreased the standards of living for Palestinians. Food production has been compromised due to the seizure of Palestinian farmland, the destruction of fertile agricultural land, and the closure of local and international markets. At this time, relief efforts have been unable to meet the growing levels of Palestinian poverty.

We call on you as world leaders to apply pressure on Israel to accept responsibility for the circumstances of the people of Palestine, refugees, and their descendants. This matter is of great urgency, and we call on you to stop hesitating and to promptly adopt clear and practical positions alleviate the Palestinian people, who have persevered forty years of egregious occupation. We also call on your active contributions towards a sustainable future for Palestine and its Diaspora.

**We call on you to direct your attention to the following data regarding the effects  
occupation have had on the pressing food security crisis in the occupied Palestinian  
territories:**

- The monthly income of 58.3% Palestinian households is below the national poverty line; this figure includes 46.5% in the West Bank, and 79.3% in the Gaza Strip.
- According to a UNICEF report on worldwide child mortality rates, Palestine currently ranks 108<sup>th</sup>. Chronic malnutrition for children under five years of age hit 10% this year, which is an increase of 36% from 1996. One half of the total number of children below two years of age suffer from anemia, while 70% suffer lack of vitamin A. The situation worsens in the Gaza Strip, where 50,000 children suffer from malnutrition.

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- Due to Israeli occupation the average cost of food products in the occupied Palestinian territories has risen over the standard world price indicated in numerous reports:
  - Food production and consumption levels in the Gaza Strip have been compromised by Israeli control over the fishing industry, the export and import of food goods, and the import of vital raw materials.
  - In the past year, 95% of factories in Gaza have shut down. According to a report by the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights in the Palestinian territories, 75,000 out of 110,000 workers in the private sector have been dismissed since the closure of Gaza last year.
  - The Palestinian bread basket has been reduced due to the Israeli control of fertile agricultural land in the West Bank, and the razing of large portions of farmland in the Gaza Strip. This problem has been exacerbated by an increase of 500,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank this past year, who live on fertile agricultural land that was appropriated from the Palestinian people. The building of the separation wall, additional military bases and the construction of new roads linking Israeli settlements have further degraded Palestinian agricultural land. In 2007, the separation wall reduced Palestinian land in the West Bank by 15%, and Israeli settlements further reduced West Bank land by 3.3%.
  - Over the past seven years Israel has uprooted 1.6 million Palestinian trees, which has serious implications for climate change, and could further jeopardize Palestinian food production. From 2000 to 2007, Israel has destroyed 2,851 dunums, 13,147 dunums of vegetables, and 14,076 dunums of Palestinian field crops. Over the course of the past five years, the Israeli Occupied Authorities have destroyed 455 wells, 37,929 dunums of irrigation networks, 1,070,940 meters of main pipelines, 1,878 of irrigation pools, 930 agricultural stores, and 1,862 of animal barns and stables.
  - Despite adequate water resources, Israeli control over Palestinian water supplies has resulted in disproportionate usage ratios between Israelis and Palestinians. According to the World Health Organization, the minimum daily water intake of an individual is 100 liters. Currently, Israeli citizens use an average of 150 liters a day, in some areas, Israelis consume up to 300 liters a day. Palestinians exist on 30 to 50 liters a day. Palestinian water consumption has been further compromised by the isolation of 26 water wells by the separation wall.

**Accordingly, your efforts to reduce the obstacles facing the world food crisis and climate changes should encompass all the entirety of the occupied Palestinian Territories. We wish utmost success to your conference and its goals.**

**End**



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