

Transatlantic Civil Servants' Statement on Gaza:
It Is Our Duty To Speak Out
When Our Governments' Policies Are Wrong

*Released February 2, 2024 [signed by over 800 civil servants]**

Declaration of civil servants regarding Gaza:

Recalling that:

- We have the duty to respect, protect and uphold our constitutions and international and national legal obligations which our democratically elected executives have committed us to;
- We are expected as civil servants to respect, serve and uphold the law while implementing policies, regardless of the political parties in power; that we have done so for our entire careers;
- We have been hired to serve, inform and advise our governments/institutions and we have demonstrated professionalism, expertise, and experience that our governments have relied on over the past decades of our service;
- We have internally expressed our concerns that the policies of our governments/institutions do not serve our interests and called for alternatives that would better serve national and international security, democracy and freedom; reflect the core principles of western foreign policy; and incorporate lessons learned;
- Our professional concerns were overruled by political and ideological considerations;
- We are obliged to do everything in our power on behalf of our countries and ourselves to not be complicit in one of the worst human catastrophes of this century; and
- We are obliged to warn the publics of our countries, whom we serve, and to act in concert with transnational colleagues.

We publicly reiterate our concerns that:

- Israel has shown no boundaries in its military operations in Gaza which has resulted in tens of thousands of preventable civilian deaths; and that the deliberate blocking of aid by Israel has led to a humanitarian catastrophe, putting thousands of civilians at risk of starvation and slow death;
- Israel's military operations have not contributed to its goal of releasing all hostages and is putting their well-being, lives and release at risk;
- Israel's military operations have disregarded all important counterterrorism expertise gained since 9/11; and that the operation has not contributed to Israel's goal of defeating Hamas and instead

has strengthened the appeal of Hamas, Hezbollah and other negative actors;

- The ongoing military operation will be detrimental not just for Israel's own security but also regional stability; the risk of wider wars is also negatively impacting stated security objectives of our governments;
- Our governments have provided the Israeli military operation with public, diplomatic and military support; that this support has been given without real conditions or accountability; and that when faced with humanitarian catastrophe, our governments have failed to call for an immediate ceasefire and an end to blockages of necessary food/water/medicine in Gaza;
- Our governments' current policies weaken their moral standing and undermine their ability to stand up for freedom, justice, and human rights globally and weaken our efforts to rally international support for Ukraine and to counter malign actions by Russia, China and Iran; and
- There is a plausible risk that our governments' policies are contributing to grave violations of international humanitarian law, war crimes and even ethnic cleansing or genocide.

We therefore call on our governments/institutions to:

- Stop asserting to the public that there is a strategic and defensible rationale behind the Israeli operation and that supporting it is in our countries' interests;
- Hold Israel, like all actors, accountable to international humanitarian and human rights standards applied elsewhere and to forcefully respond to attacks against civilians, as we are doing in our support to the Ukrainian people; this includes demanding immediate and full implementation of the recent [order of the International Court of Justice](#);
- Use all leverage available - including a halt to military support - to secure a lasting ceasefire and full humanitarian access in Gaza and a safe release of all hostages; and
- Develop a strategy for lasting peace that includes a secure Palestinian state and guarantees for Israel's security, so that an attack like 7 October and an offensive on Gaza never happen again.

Coordinated by civil servants in:

- European Union institutions and bodies
- The Netherlands
- United States

Also endorsed by civil servants in:

- Belgium
- Canada
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Italy
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom

* This statement builds on previous internal and public statements that condemned Hamas, called for the release of hostages, and called for a ceasefire. [[US staff letter](#); *Netherlands staff*: [Dutch](#); [English](#); *EU staff statement*]