



## Statement of Mourning for the Gazans and the World

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The Lemkin Institute mourns with immense sorrow and despair for the Palestinian people of Gaza. In complete darkness, without access to one another or the outside world, Gazan families are facing intensified bombing tonight and what appears to be a partial ground invasion from Israel after three weeks of incessant bombardment and dwindling supplies of food, water, medicines, and fuel. The Israeli government and military are in full control without the counterweight, however slight, of external witnesses.

Tonight there is a terrible pain in all of our hearts.

We realize that we are in a very dark moment in human history, one that will not be forgotten. It is the moment when the United States, the 'City on a Hill' that long claimed to be a beacon for humanity, and Israel, the nation state of a stateless people who suffered immeasurable loss at the hands of Nazi Germany, have allied in favor of a very public embrace of a policy of genocide for a marginalized, impoverished, and persecuted people – many of whom are descendants of refugees from the 1948 genocide called the Nakba – who have been humiliated and traumatized by permanent siege and collective imprisonment since 2007.

It is worth noting that these two major military powers are committing genocide in Gaza only weeks after actively enabling genocide against another besieged people: the Armenians of Artsakh, who were forcibly displaced from their indigenous homelands by the Azerbaijani military in September. If the world allows these two powers to continue to act with this level of impunity, genocide will become the normative policy of both dictatorships and the world's so-called democracies alike.

The futility of genocide is on our minds tonight as we observe the radicalization of Israel's violence against Palestinians. The genocidal siege of Gaza will bring neither security nor peace. It is only making our world more dangerous—for small and marginalized communities especially, but also for the big powers who erroneously feel they are invincible. At the Lemkin Institute, we know all too well that violence begets more violence, particularly when that violence is genocide.

Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims, and Jewish people all over the world are facing a rise in hate crimes and harassment on the basis of their ethnicity and religion since October 7. This is a deeply difficult and painful time for these communities. The Lemkin Institute stands in solidarity with them. We have spoken out and will continue to speak out about both the current genocide in Gaza and the devastating consequences it has had for diaspora communities. Unfortunately we fear that these communities will only become less secure in the wake of Israel's genocide.

As we have watched the catastrophes of September and October 2023 unfold, the Lemkin Institute has become increasingly baffled by the extent to which Israel and the USA are seeking to justify their actions with reference to immoral and genocidal arguments, such as the idea that neither of them are responsible for Israel's actions—which it has undertaken on its own free will as a sovereign nation—but rather that Hamas, by invading Israel on October 7 and killing over 1400 Israelis and kidnapping 220 more, is somehow responsible for all the actions of its adversaries, no matter what it is they choose to do. As ordinary people embrace such justifications, they become complicit in genocide, and genocide becomes normalized, even valorized, thereby paving the way for more mass atrocities down the road.

We wish to make it very clear that all the people who are courageously protesting across the globe against this genocide, sometimes at great personal cost, are engaging in invaluable genocide prevention work. We are thinking in particular of the courageous Palestinian and Jewish protesters from Jewish Voice for Peace who were arrested today for protesting at Grand Central Terminal in New York City. Efforts among governments in the Western world to make these protests illegal and costly for participants are nothing more than Orwellian efforts to inhibit world citizens from holding their governments accountable. At the Lemkin Institute, we believe this robust censorship and persecution is not only undemocratic in the extreme, but also an assault on the very work that is needed in the world today – the only work that has a chance of dragging humanity out of its headlong dive into the oblivion of rampant imperialism and capitalism, as well as into the environmental degradation that comes with these things. This work is the work of ordinary humanity, of the global grassroots, to join forces across

our many divides to usher in a new era of peace, justice, equality, and shared prosperity based on human dignity and mutual aid.

We are in mourning tonight, but tomorrow we will continue our work in solidarity with threatened peoples, including Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, in the hopes of contributing to a better world for all of our children. Although we are a nondenominational organization, tonight we join with others all over the world in standing in solidarity with and praying for the people of Gaza: “In the Name of Allah with Whose Name there is protection against every kind of harm in the earth or in the heaven, and he is the All-Hearing and All-Knowing.”