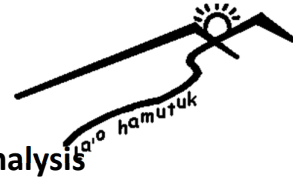


# La'o Hamutuk



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## La'o Hamutuk in Solidarity with the Palestinian People

29 August 2024

The Palestinian people have long suffered at the hands of Israel. The Palestinian people, who have been defending their rights and want to stop being killed and tortured by Israel, which has illegally occupied Palestinian people's land since 1947, continue to be denied their rights. In the long war that started many years ago and continues today, innocent people have become victims – they cannot access health care or schools, and are prevented from obtaining daily necessities. People are not free to express their rights. The most vulnerable people are victims; Military aggression against the Palestinian people has caused massive human rights violations and now genocide of civilians in Gaza.

Since Hamas attacked civilians in Israel in October 2023, the suffering of the two peoples -- Palestinians and Israelis – has worsened; more than 40,000 Palestinians have been killed and more than 90,000 have been injured. This situation has forced nearly two million people to flee their homes in the Gaza Strip and caused widespread hunger; at the same time innocent children cannot access nutritious food.<sup>1</sup> The Israeli government has destroyed hospitals, homes, and schools, and blocked essential humanitarian assistance from entering Gaza – a crime against humanity. Such situations weaken the Palestinian people even more and have been happening for many years. Israel has displaced the population in Gaza several times; now there is no safe place in Gaza, and where can the people go?

International media report incessant casualties; bombs destroy public places, places of worship, hospitals, schools, homes -- lost children, lost wives, lost husbands, lost resources every day. Israel has killed many journalists; there are no foreign journalists in Gaza now. Almost 70% of the people killed are women and children, this is a serious crime; everyone in this world has the right to life and happiness, but people in the land of Palestine do not get that.

La'o Hamutuk strongly condemns the barbarism and genocide that Israel and Hamas have committed against civilians in Palestine and Israel, the best solution is for the two forces to stop fighting immediately (cease-fire) and begin a genuine dialogue leading to a two-state solution, where Israelis and Palestinians can live peacefully side-by-side, as Timorese and Indonesians do today.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, The Question of Palestine, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/six-months-of-gaza-war-statement-by-the-humanitarian-coordinator-for-the-occupied-palestinian-territory-mr-jamie-mcgoldrick/>, 6 May 2024

## **The United Nations Must Take Immediate Action**

The United Nations and major countries such as the United States of America, United Kingdom, Canada, the Netherlands, know exactly what is happening there -- human rights have been violated for many years. These countries try to ignore reality and let ordinary people continue to die, they continue to close their eyes and diminish the importance of Palestinian lives. It is even worse when developed countries including the USA, UK, Germany and Italy,<sup>2</sup> who are more aware of and understand human rights, provide support and weapons that continue to inflict suffering on the Palestinian people. The UN Security Council, which is responsible to ensure peace and harmony among nations, does not act decisively to end the suffering of the two peoples.

This reminds us of the many years during which the UN failed to take effective action to end the illegal Indonesian occupation of Timor-Leste, when hundreds of thousands of people, an entire generation, were killed by Indonesian troops supported by the USA, Australia and other countries. During the quarter-century of resistance, Timor-Leste never attacked Indonesian civilians or brought the armed struggle into Indonesian territory. After 24 years of occupation by the Indonesian dictatorship, Timor-Leste finally achieved liberation, through campaigns by FALINTIL, the clandestine front, and diplomats, with support from international solidarity activists. La'o Hamutuk believes that the Palestinian people should have a similar strategy, not to sacrifice innocent people.

2.15 million people live in Gaza, and the *Integrated Food Security Phase Classification* reports that almost 96% of them will face acute food insecurity by next month, and the crisis will continue to get worse.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, Israel is preventing people in Gaza from accessing humanitarian assistance, food, medicine and water. This means that the longer the attack continues, the more dire the situation there will be.

The United Nations needs to take immediate action to avert this worsening situation; the UN must impose severe sanctions on countries who continue to provide weapons to kill Palestinian people. Human rights violations in Palestine must stop. The UN bears full responsibility to end the suffering faced by people of both countries.

## **Timor-Leste's Affirmation to Respect and Defend the Right to Sovereignty**

The people of Timor-Leste long suffered under illegal Indonesian occupation – military aggression, torture, sexual violence, displacement, forced starvation, and miserable living conditions throughout Timor-Leste. That experience helps people here understand the long suffering that the Palestinian people face today. The State of Timor-Leste has a principle to strongly defend democracy and human rights, including the rights of people worldwide, as enshrined in article 10.1 of our Constitution: “The Democratic Republic of East Timor shall extend its solidarity to the struggle of the peoples for national liberation.” And on 23 April 2024, our Government affirmed “the right of the peoples of Palestine and Israel to live side

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<sup>2</sup> BBC, Gaza War: Where does Israel get its weapons, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68737412>, 6 May 2024

<sup>3</sup> IPC - *Integrated Food Security Phase Classification*, GAZA STRIP: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Special Snapshot, 25 June 2024

by side in peace, with dignity, and in safety,” underlining Timor-Leste's commitment to defend everyone’s right to sovereignty.<sup>4</sup>

La’o Hamutuk appreciates the Government’s statement, and La’o Hamutuk believes that Timor-Leste should support the long-suffering people of Palestine. Therefore, Timor-Leste’s Government should make a stronger statement, to tell the Israeli Government to stop inflicting suffering on the Palestinian people and demand that the United States and other countries immediately stop supplying weapons and diplomatic support to the Israeli government. As His Excellency Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão told the development partners meeting last May, “... so many other people need the solidarity and help of the International Community. From Syria to Yemen, from the people of Palestine to the people of Myanmar, from the Ukrainian people to the Saharawi people – so many nations, some forgotten, in their silent struggle for freedom and dignity!”<sup>5</sup>

La’o Hamutuk remains committed to defending the rights of all victims and international human rights principles, including the right to self-determination. In 2009, La'o Hamutuk and other NGOs issued a statement and met with the Head of UNMIT, the President’s Office and the U.S. Embassy, urging them to respect international humanitarian law that prohibits attacks on civilians, including asking the United States to stop military support for Israel.<sup>6</sup> In 2017, La’o Hamutuk and other groups reaffirmed their solidarity with Palestine and their defense and respect for human rights for all people, and their right to sovereignty.<sup>7</sup>

We demand that the Government of Israel and its supporters immediately stop their violence against people in Gaza and the West Bank and undertake serious negotiations to achieve a two-state solution.

## **The struggle for peace and human rights continues!**

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<sup>4</sup> Government of Timor-Leste, Timor-Leste statement on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, <https://timor-leste.gov.tl/?p=37465&lang=en>, 23 April 2024.

<sup>5</sup> Speech by Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão at Timor-Leste Development Partners Meeting, 17 May 2024 [https://timor-leste.gov.tl/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/ENG\\_Discurso-do-PM-no-TLDPM-17.05.2024-vers%C3%A3o-final.pdf](https://timor-leste.gov.tl/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/ENG_Discurso-do-PM-no-TLDPM-17.05.2024-vers%C3%A3o-final.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> La’o Hamutuk, Timor-Leste Solidarity for the Palestinian People in Gaza, <https://www.laohamutuk.org/War/09PalestineStmt.htm>, 19 January 2009

<sup>7</sup> The Timor-Leste Association of Ex-Political Prisoners and Klibur Solidariedade (Solidarity Association) send congratulations and solidarity to Palestinian Political Prisoners, 6 June 2017. <https://www.laohamutuk.org/Justice/2017/TLSolidPalesPrisJun2017en.pdf>