



Federazione Impiegati Operai Metallurgici nazionale

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Comitato Centrale

COMITATO CENTRALE F.I.O.M.

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GAZA

For nearly two years the Gaza Strip has been subjected to what can only be described as a state of siege by Israel, with interruption of electricity, lack of heating, scarcity of drinking water, a healthcare emergency and no freedom of movement for persons or goods. UN Observers have repeatedly denounced the condition of the inhabitants of Gaza as inhumane, in violation of all International Conventions on Human Rights.

Thus, it appears a kind of “collective punishment” has been imposed on all Palestinians because of the vote expressed in the democratic elections two years ago, with a Hamas victory. For F.I.O.M., the negative political evaluation of this organization is not up for discussion and we reiterate our choice to support the formation of an independent, secular and democratic Palestinian state living in peace and mutual security with that of Israel. What we denounce is the international community’s tolerance and, in fact, support of the mistaken choice of the siege, which contributed to the strengthening of the fundamentalist forces and armed groups of all types, rather than their isolation. The launch of Kassam rockets on Israel is also the result of this situation. This rocket fire is wrong and illegal, because it hurts Israeli civilians. It is harmful to the Palestinian cause itself. And it is used to create consensus in the Israeli population on the offensive against the people of Gaza. The Israeli army began its attack on Gaza on December 27, 2008, with a substantial deployment of forces, followed by a land invasion and use of white phosphorus on the civilian population, which is banned by international conventions, causing a true massacre, and committing intolerable war crimes for any democratic conscience.

Israel has gone so far as to attempt to hide what is happening, preventing International Observers and journalists from entering Gaza. Those responsible for these crimes must be prosecuted and judged by the relevant international institutions. The Israeli government should be held accountable for its repeated violations of international law, including humanitarian law, by national governments, the European Union, the international community, just as violations committed by any other government would be.

In particular, the EU-Israel Association Agreement, whose application is bound to respect of human rights, should be immediately suspended; the Italian government, which, unlike other European governments, has characterized itself in a negative light by the complete subordination and support of political choices of the Israeli government, must suspend the Military Cooperation Agreement of Italy with Israel, a belligerent country that violates international law and human rights.

In denouncing this situation, the FIOM Central Committee believes it necessary to immediately ensure that all political forces, the government, European and international institutions work for:

- An immediate, general and permanent ceasefire;
- Humanitarian protection of the civilian population of Gaza;
- An end to the invasion of Gaza and withdrawal of Israeli troops;
- Cessation of missile fire on Israel;
- An end to the siege and embargo of Gaza;
- Concrete steps to achieve a rapid end to the occupation of Palestinian territories.

These conditions can promote the opening of a negotiated peace – based on the resolutions of the United Nations – which includes all stakeholders, beginning with the legitimate institution of the PNA, and finding ways to include Hamas as a democratically elected representative.

The FIOM Central Committee condemns all initiatives of an anti-Semitic nature and those that deny the right of the State of Israel to exist.

We judge negatively all anti-Arab or anti-Muslim expressions.

We express our solidarity to Palestinian people and our support to that brave minority inside Israeli civil society that is fighting against the occupation, against the Gaza siege and the current massacre.

We commit ourselves to supporting the above-mentioned objectives and in participating in all the activities that focus on them.

On the 17th of January, different groups and coalitions called for two separate demonstrations for the ceasefire in Gaza. Although we think these simultaneous demonstration inopportune, we believe that it is essential that the two initiatives not to be in contrast, because in both cases the demonstrations are in solidarity with Palestinian people and to stop the massacre.

Therefore, FIOM, in addition to participating in the demonstration in Assisi, called by *Tavola della Pace*, that engages the whole of Cgil, will also be present with a delegation at the demonstration in Rome, called by the Palestinian Community.