

## **Statement On The Situation In The Middle East**

The Government of Barbados recalls the Statement issued on behalf of the member states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on October 9th, 2023.

Barbados condemns the heinous terrorist attacks perpetrated on Israel on October 7th, 2023 which caused over a thousand to lose their lives and hundreds to be taken hostage, including women and children. Those responsible for these devastating violent acts must be brought to account.

We express our alarm at the deteriorating situation in the Middle East and our deep concern for the safety and security of the people of Israel and Palestine.

The conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza threatens to spill over to the entire Middle East with catastrophic results for the people of that region, global peace and the already fragile multilateral order. If the conflict continues unabated it will also have devastating impacts on vulnerable populations everywhere.

The international community of sovereign states and their peoples must therefore unite and prevent the situation from any further deterioration. The UN Security Council must act urgently and in unison.

An immediate humanitarian ceasefire, as called for by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, is essential in order to ensure the protection of the lives and wellbeing of the innocent civilians of Israel and Gaza. Even with the best intentions and the most sophisticated weapons, any aerial bombardment in Gaza, an area smaller than Barbados, but with seven times our own population, is bound to have devastating effects on civilians. The death of thousands of Palestinians is testimony to this.

Barbados further calls for the immediate, unconditional release of all hostages and the provision of humanitarian assistance in all its dimensions to the people of Gaza.

Since joining the United Nations upon our independence in 1966, Barbados has supported a two-state solution, recognising the rights of the people of both Israel and Palestine to their own state.

The international community must now urgently agree and take action to ensure that the Palestinian people can exercise their right to self-determination in an independent internationally-recognised state of their own in accordance with international law.

A sustainable peace must be the world's singular focus and it is only with dialogue that this can be achieved.

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