

The address of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States before the extraordinary session of the League Council at the summit level in Riyadh

11 November 2023

Your Royal Highness Prince Mohamed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Israel's war on the Gaza Strip is not a novel occurrence, yet the collective desire and hope persist that it will be the last.

Since the onset of its occupation of the Strip, Israel has harboured a desire for the local inhabitants to vanish, either by leaving or facing displacement. This disturbing sentiment has escalated to the extent of a minister suggesting the use of a nuclear weapon on the area. There exists a profound Israeli animosity towards the resilient residents of the Gaza Strip, individuals deserving of our respect, appreciation, and support. Tragically, Israel has claimed the lives of over 10,000 civilians, with at least half being women and children, in a disturbing campaign marked by ethnic cleansing, genocide, and systematic violence, all under the scrutiny of the global community. This cycle of violence and bloodshed is poised to sow seeds of hatred for generations.

Over the past month, we've implored international powers and the Security Council to shield Palestinian civilians from the malevolence of Israel's retaliatory actions. Regrettably, the Council has repeatedly failed, with certain forces refusing to restrain Israel's responses to the events of 7 October, even characterising its brutal massacres as acts of self-defence.

Your Majesties, Excellencies, and Highnesses, there are practical measures that I view as imperative:

First: A paramount priority is a comprehensive ceasefire, a goal that everyone with the capability should actively pursue, transcending all other considerations. Efforts to prevent the escalation of the conflict must recognise that the ongoing Israeli military oppression in Gaza heightens the risk of regional confrontation.

Second: Forced displacement, whether in Gaza, the West Bank, or East Jerusalem, constitutes an international crime and a blatant violation of international humanitarian law. This action is resoundingly rejected by Palestinians, Arabs, and the global community. Despite the unwarranted aspirations of extremist Israeli forces, intent on a second transfer, we stand united in preventing the realisation of their fascist desires.

Third: Discussions regarding the future of Gaza cannot be isolated from the prospective futures of the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem. These components collectively form the territorial basis of the Palestinian state, delineated by the borders established on 4 June 1967. Importantly, all discussions currently centre around security matters concerning the Gaza Strip,

yet the absence of discourse on a political resolution and the lack of a viable implementation mechanism persist as glaring omissions. It is imperative to refrain from further postponement, as prolonged inaction risks regressing to square one.

Your Majesties, Excellencies, and Highnesses,

Several Western countries, notably in Europe, have shown interest in organising an international peace conference to address the implementation of a political solution to the conflict, centred around the two-state solution. Despite some regrettable and unbalanced stances from certain countries and officials, there is potential benefit in engaging with supporters of this approach, aiming to actualise a political path aligning with the two-state solution desired by all the world, except for the occupying forces.

Restoring normalcy in resilient Gaza will undoubtedly be an arduous and long journey, but I trust that our member states will extend unwavering support and assistance. The people of Gaza deserve our collective solidarity in confronting the repercussions of the aggression.

Our prayers go out to the families of the victims and the suffering people. We earnestly hope that people of conscience worldwide heed our message for an immediate cessation of this destructive conflict.

Peace, mercy, and blessings of God.