

To the Press and the Public,

In the armed conflicts that have commenced in the regions of Palestine and Israel, it is a matter of grave concern that international treaties are being openly flouted, and heinous acts of violence against civilians, irrespective of age or gender, are being perpetrated right before the eyes of the whole world. The most recent incident of such a nature transpired on the 17th of October, 2023, with the bombardment of the al-Ahli Baptist Hospital in Gaza, resulting in the tragic loss of hundreds of civilian lives.

Right before the eyes of the whole world, densely populated residential areas and hospitals are coming under attack, and individuals are being displaced from their homes or forced to leave. It is evident that the number of civilians forced to endure challenging living conditions is steadily rising, with settlements suffering damage. This situation is leading us to a stage where even fundamental humanitarian needs are not being met due to embargoes and blockades.

It is clear that there exists a serious, humanitarian, and unlawful threat to the access rights of the region's civilians regarding basic necessities like shelter, clean water, nutrition, medicine, and healthcare.

In the present context, the intentional targeting of civilians in conflicts, as well as the deliberate targeting of hospitals and subjecting civilians to severe living conditions, collectively amounts to the commission of the crime of genocide. It is apparent that nations may exhibit apathy toward this matter, and international legal mechanisms may not be duly invoked.

Nonetheless, it is imperative to underscore that humanity cannot afford to normalize such circumstances.

The imperative of ceasing lethal interventions against civilians and orchestrating evacuations from the region, particularly focusing on children, women, and those who are injured or ill, constitutes a compelling humanitarian necessity.

We extend an invitation to international bodies, with the United Nations at the forefront, urging them to discharge their responsibilities in quelling crimes against humanity and ushering in an era of peace.

The enforcement of the rule of law stands as the foundational stride toward peace. In this context, it is imperative to underscore that the resolution of the Palestinian issue hinges upon the adherence to existing United Nations resolutions as the prevailing legal framework, and the establishment of a new, enduring legal apparatus encompassing the lifting of the siege imposed on the civilian population.

Given the universality of law, legal professionals must unite under a universal outlook, driven by the dual goals of standing against injustice and advocating for peace through the medium of law. As such, today, on the 18th of October 2023, we have shared a written communication with legal bodies worldwide, including the European Bar Federation, of which the Istanbul

Bar Association is a founding member, to extend an invitation to join us in championing the causes of Peace and Law.

Adhering to the cherished principle of our Great Leader, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, “Peace at Home, Peace in the World” the Istanbul Bar Association shall persist in being a resolute voice for peace, justice, and those who often go unheard.

ISTANBUL BAR ASSOCIATION