

**NOVEMBER 2023, ISSUE 10**

**SPECIAL EDITION:**

# ISRAEL/PALESTINE



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Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights empowers civilians in war zones to monitor and document violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. This month's newsletter addresses the need for an immediate ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas conflict, explains the rules of siege warfare, and provides an update on our ongoing reparations project in Ukraine. Don't miss the details inside about upcoming fundraising opportunities to help support our crucial initiatives.

## **Contents**

p2... **SAVING CIVILIAN LIVES IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE**

p3... **RULES OF SIEGE WARFARE**

p5... **UKRAINE PROJECT UPDATE**

p7... **FUNDRAISING CALENDAR 2023-2024**

# SAVING CIVILIAN LIVES IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE

**International states acting in support of continued fighting must acknowledge the need for a permanent ceasefire and emphasise the necessity for its immediate implementation.**



**‘AGAIN AND AGAIN IN THE HISTORY OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT, INTERNATIONAL ACTORS HAVE SERVED TO PROVOKE OR EXACERBATE VIOLENCE RATHER THAN TO PROMOTE DE-ESCALATION’**

The magnitude of civilian casualties is catastrophic and continues to escalate. 1,200 lives were lost and 240 hostages taken in last month’s attacks by Hamas. Israel’s retaliatory campaign in Gaza has resulted in the death of over 11,000 people (41% of those being children), more than 27,000 people have been injured, and a staggering 1.6 million individuals have been displaced from their homes.

The UK, the US and other states supporting Israel, and those states supporting Hamas, including Iran, must implement their responsibility to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and to prevent further war crimes. ‘Again and again in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, international actors have served to provoke or exacerbate violence rather than to promote de-escalation,’ said Ceasefire. ‘All states should now support the voices of those Palestinian and Israeli civilians calling for peace.’

Ceasefire welcomes the news of a four-day pause in fighting but emphasises the need for a permanent ceasefire and the immediate return of all hostages.



**CEASE  
FIRE  
NOW.**

See Ceasefire’s full statement: <https://www.ceasefire.org/uk-other-states-must-act-to-prevent-further-war-crimes-in-israel-palestine/>

# RULES OF SIEGE WARFARE

## WHAT IS A SIEGE?

“a partial or total encirclement of enemy forces in a village, town, or city for military advantage in an armed conflict, whether with a view to inducing the surrender of the besieged forces or to impeding their effective contribution to military action”



@Taiz, Yemen ©AlHajj/Shutterstock

With recent major city sieges in Israel/Palestine, Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Ethiopia, and the Philippines, the need to understand the rules of siege warfare is greater than ever.

## SIEGES UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW

Siege warfare is subject to legal constraints under international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law, but the level of compliance has varied widely, with conduct sometimes amounting to an international crime.

- **Rules on distinction:** although it may be lawful to besiege a defended city or other populated area strictly on the basis that military personnel remain within and are not hors de combat because of wounds or sickness, civilians can never be the target of attack. Indiscriminate attacks which fail to distinguish between military and civilian objects are also prohibited.
- **Rules on proportionality:** all parties to armed conflict are prohibited from launching attacks which ‘may be expected’ to cause ‘excessive’ civilian harm when compared to the ‘concrete and direct military advantage anticipated’.
- If laying a siege is held to **constitute an ‘attack’ under IHL**, then the siege itself would be unlawful if the expected

IS IT LAWFUL TO  
BESIEGE A  
POPULATION?

WHAT RULES  
PROTECT CIVILIANS  
IN SITUATIONS OF  
SIEGE?



‘PUBLIC  
REVULSION AT THE  
TREATMENT OF  
CIVILIANS IN  
CITIES UNDER  
SIEGE IN UKRAINE  
SHOULD SPARK  
URGENT  
REFLECTION IN  
MILITARIES  
AROUND THE  
WORLD,’ SAID  
CEASEFIRE’S  
EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR MARK  
LATTIMER.

‘THE LAW OF THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS REQUIRES BOTH ATTACKING AND DEFENDING FORCES TO TAKE ALL FEASIBLE PRECAUTIONS TO PROTECT THE CIVILIAN POPULATION, BUT IN A SIEGE CIVILIANS ARE TRAPPED IN THE BATTLESPACE,’ ADDED MR LATTIMER. ‘THEIR TREATMENT UNDER SIEGE IS UNBEARABLE – AND FREQUENTLY UNLAWFUL.’



civilian harm from the siege as a whole was excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated.

- The **starvation of the civilian population** as a method of war is **prohibited**, as is the destruction or removal of food, water sources and other objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population.

Civilians are not just protected by IHL but also human rights law which applies in armed conflict, as confirmed by the UK Supreme Court and the International Court of Justice.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To avoid or minimize civilian harm, Ceasefire calls on all governments laying or supporting sieges to:

- Review legal guidance and military doctrine to ensure that **international humanitarian law protections** are being **fully implemented** in situations of siege.
- Improve **pre-attack proportionality assessment procedures**, removing the assumption that where civilians are not visible they are not present, and incorporating an estimation of the reverberating effects on civilians.
- Conduct **post-strike assessments** to determine legal compliance and improve civilian protection.
- Implement the Political Declaration on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, committing to **avoiding the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in towns and cities**, in particular where civilians are trapped under siege.
- **Commit unequivocally to the prohibition on the starvation of civilians as a method of war.** The UK should withdraw its stated understanding that IHL is not violated ‘if military operations are not intended to cause starvation [of the civilian population] but have that incidental effect’.
- To better understand and support the **role of civilians themselves** in supporting civilian protection and resilience including **civilian-led monitoring** and **relevant IHL training** for both military and humanitarian personnel.

See Ceasefire’s full report: <https://www.ceasefire.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Protecting-civilians-in-siege-warfare-CEASEFIRE-2.pdf>



# UKRAINE PROJECT UPDATE

To truly bring justice to the vast majority of Ukrainian civilians and enable them to rebuild their lives, reparations are imperative. Recognising the urgency of this need, Ceasefire has taken a proactive stance in addressing this critical issue. We have partnered with Ukrainian NGOs to strengthen civil society participation in the design and delivery of inclusive reparations mechanisms for Ukraine's civilians.

OVER 27,000  
CASUALTIES AND  
1.5 MILLION  
HOMES  
DESTROYED SINCE  
THE OUTBREAK OF  
WAR IN UKRAINE



@EVGENIY MALOLETKA

## Update on the War:

Since our last update in the July 2022 newsletter, the situation regarding civilian casualties in Ukraine remains dire, with a further 11,949 civilian casualties verified by the OHCHR – the actual figure is predicted to be much higher. The total number of casualties since the start of the war now stands at a staggering 27,449 (as of 24th September 2023). Additionally, over 1.5 million homes have been destroyed. Clearly, the need for reparations is more pressing than ever.

## Understanding Reparations:

Reparations encompass actions directed at rectifying human rights violations. Ceasefire is working to promote an international approach to reparations which can deliver justice, providing civilians harmed with compensation, medical support, rehabilitation and security to enable them to rebuild their lives and homes. The UN and the EU talk about supporting economic reconstruction, but experience from other conflicts shows that civilians who have been directly harmed are often last to benefit. Ceasefire is working to combat this issue, ensuring that reparations are adequate, effective and prompt.

## Ceasefire's Guiding Principles on Reparations for Ukraine:

Ceasefire has developed an international route map outlining a proposed reparations scheme for Ukraine. This framework contains a set of foundational guiding principles:

1. **Civilians First** – reparations should prioritise claims submitted by individuals, families and communities over those made by state entities or legal persons
2. **Holistic Approach** – reparations should be holistic, recognising that compensation alone may not be enough; restitution rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition may be as important if not more important for repairing the harm caused to individuals, families and communities
3. **Victim-Orientated Approach** – prompt, accessible and proportionate reparations with proper assistance to victims should be ensured
4. **Inclusive and Non-Discriminatory** – reparation for civilians who are often overlooked or underserved, including survivors of sexual or gender-based violence, must be ensured
5. **The Perpetrator Should Pay** – the Russian Federation and Russian leadership should be held responsible as it is the state responsible for the violations and – in the case of crimes under international law – the individuals responsible who should pay



Kyiv, Ukraine ©Shutterstock

Ceasefire remains steadfast in its commitment to addressing the urgent need for reparations in Ukraine. By advocating for a comprehensive and victim-centred approach, we aim to bring justice, healing, and a path to rebuilding for the civilians affected by the ongoing conflict.

# CEASEFIRE FUNDRAISING EVENTS

## CALENDAR 2023 - 2024

### SANTA IN THE CITY

December 2023



### BARCELONA HALF

February 2024



### BARCELONA MARATHON

March 2024



### PARIS HALF MARATHON

March 2024



### PARIS MARATHON

April 2024



### MANCHESTER MARATHON

April 2024



### HACKNEY HALF

May 2024



### EDINBURGH 10K/5K

May 2024



### EDINBURGH MARATHON/HALF

May 2024



### ASICS 10K

July 2024



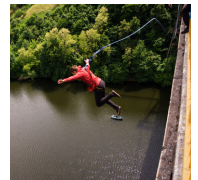
### INFLATABLE 5K

Multiple dates and locations (2024)



### BUNGEE JUMPS

Multiple dates and locations (2024)



WOULD YOU LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN A CHALLENGE EVENT  
WHILST RAISING FUNDS FOR AN IMPORTANT CAUSE?

CHECK OUT SOME OF THE AWESOME EVENTS BELOW AND  
JOIN THE TEAM!

Check out the 'Run for Charity' page on our website for more  
information. <https://www.ceasefire.org/run-for-charity/>

If you have another event in mind, please get in contact with  
us. We would love to partner with you!

Email: [fundraising@ceasefire.org](mailto:fundraising@ceasefire.org)