



Statement of the Israeli Union of Social Workers – Histadrut on the situation in Gaza

War is always horrible and it is a lose-lose situation.

Social workers rarely create the situations in which we intervene; we react to people's needs at any given time. In Israel, social workers are working day and night to assist the victims of the rockets, launched by the terrorist organization of Hamas, throughout Israel. We are sure that social workers in Gaza are working day and night as well, to relieve the suffering of the Gazan civilians and assist the casualties. As social workers it is our role and duty to promote resilience and to provide people with the tools to find the strength to overcome these traumatic times so that they will be able to return to normal functioning as soon as possible following the cessation of hostilities.

Yesterday marked the first cease fire that seems to be holding, after a month of fighting and rocket fire. All Israeli troops have withdrawn from Gaza. The sides in the conflict are, finally, negotiating about a long term ceasefire agreement. The Israeli Union of Social Workers firmly hopes that this will be the first day in a permanent period of quiet on both sides of the border and will lead to rebuilding damaged infrastructure, rebuilding the lives of all those who were displaced in the fighting and a long period of economic growth for both Palestinians and Israelis. We hope that this will be a first step toward a comprehensive peace which will yield a two states for two peoples solution and an end to the destructive cycles of violence and allow all citizens of the region a life of dignity and self-determination.

Achieving this goal requires that all parties recognize the basic rights of the others. It requires the acceptance of solution. There needs to be a development of mutual respect and trust that is lacking today.

Accordingly, we call on the PUSWP, our Palestinian counterparts, to initiate a dialogue with us, which will facilitate meetings on professional issues and begin the process of building trust and understanding among Israeli and Palestinian grassroots.

We call on the Israeli and the Palestinian political leaders to reach a peace agreement that will promote the process of democracy in the region in order to enable the Palestinians and the Israelis to live peacefully with freedom and dignity.