



## ECONOMIC & SOCIAL JUSTICE TRUST

18 October 2023

### **Media Statement:**

### **End the Silence on the Human Suffering in Palestine**

The Economic and Social Justice Trust (ESJ) calls on Namibian civil society and human rights defenders to end their deafening silence in the face of the immense human suffering in the Middle East. We see gross human rights violations and war crimes perpetrated against unarmed civilians in Palestine. We cannot remain silent when we witness a war that bears the hallmarks of genocide. The relentless and indiscriminate bombings of unarmed civilians in their homes, places of worship, schools and hospitals are causing serious mental and bodily harm to members of this group. In addition, the current siege on Gaza denies Palestinians access to drinking water, food, electricity and life-savings medicines. This can only be interpreted as an attempt to wipe out those who have not yet succumbed to the injuries caused by the bombings. Under international law genocide is a war crime that includes acts towards the killing of members of a group; incitement to commit genocide and complicity to genocide. Silence in the face of such atrocities could be interpreted as complicity.

As a country that has experienced genocide, land dispossession, colonial occupation and Apartheid we cannot remain unmoved by similar experiences by the people of Palestine. We agree with the Namibian government that repeated and current cycles of violence must be viewed in their historical context of a 75-year-old colonial occupation. We are convinced that a just and lasting peace can only be found by ending this occupation.

As Namibians, we received international support that helped us defeat colonialism in our country. Now, it is our turn to show such international solidarity. Let our commitment to human rights and justice be a principled one which cannot be undermined by and traded for foreign donor funding. Many in our country have sacrificed and even died for our right to self-determination. Let us honour them by standing up for human rights and justice for Palestinians.

P.O. Box 96179, Windhoek, Namibia Email: [esjtrust1@gmail.com](mailto:esjtrust1@gmail.com) Tel: +264-811243438 (chairperson)

Trustees: Rinaani Musutua, Herbert Jauch, John Nakuta, Nafimane Hamukoshi, Claudius Riruako and Doufi Namalambo

We call on fellow members of civil society to show visible and audible support for:

- a) An immediate ceasefire;
- b) An end to the targeting of unarmed civilians;
- c) An end to the blockade on Gaza by opening up humanitarian corridors to allow for the entry of urgently needed water, food and medical supplies.
- d) The return to negotiations that will stop continuous land dispossession, ethnic cleansing and that will ensure Palestinians' rights to self-determination. This is the only pathway towards a lasting peace.

We also call on the Namibian government to use its membership to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to ensure accountability by asking the court to issue a statement on the matter and to expedite an investigation into war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law.

As civil society organisations committed to social justice, we cannot remain silent. History has taught us that bad things happen when good men and women do nothing. Let our silence not result in our complicity to the terrible atrocities that are happening in Palestine.

Herbert Jauch

*Chairperson*

P.O. Box 96179, Windhoek, Namibia Email: [esjtrust1@gmail.com](mailto:esjtrust1@gmail.com) Tel: +264-811243438 (chairperson)

Trustees: Rinaani Musutua, Herbert Jauch, John Nakuta, Nafimane Hamukoshi, Claudius Riruako and Doufi Namalambo