ISS Statement on the Situation in Gaza

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The International Social Service (ISS) is deeply concerned by the grave humanitarian situation in Gaza, as highlighted in recent reports of the United Nations Human Rights Council and the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The recent findings of the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry have characterized the situation as genocide and urged all countries to fulfil their obligations under international law “to end the genocide” and punish those responsible. These recent findings further underscore the urgency and severity of this crisis.

While ISS does not take political positions, our mandate compels us to speak clearly when the safety and dignity of children are at stake. The toll of the conflict on children has been catastrophic. Thousands have lost their lives or sustained life-changing injuries. Many more are displaced, orphaned, or separated from their families, with access to health care, food, education, and safe shelter severely disrupted. For children, the consequences are not only immediate but will echo through their entire lives.

ISS is especially alarmed by the plight of unaccompanied minors and children separated from their parents or caregivers. These children face heightened risks of exploitation, neglect, and long-term psychological harm. Protecting them requires urgent and coordinated measures: safe identification, tracing, and reunification with family whenever possible, and the provision of appropriate alternative care when reunification cannot be achieved.

In line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ISS reaffirms that every child has the inherent right to life, protection, family, and development, regardless of circumstance. Civilians and children above all must never be the objects of war. Safe, sustained humanitarian access is essential to meet their immediate needs and to safeguard their future.

For the International Day of Peace, ISS calls upon the international community to prioritize children in all responses to this conflict and all ongoing conflicts worldwide, to ensure their protection, support family reunification, and restore access to basic services.

ISS stands in solidarity with all children enduring the devastating consequences of conflicts and remains committed to advancing cross-border child protection, so that even in times of war, the rights and dignity of children remain at the centre of global concern.

International Social Service - General Secretariat
32, Quai du Seujet
1201 Geneva, Switzerland
+41 22 906 77 00
info@iss-ssi.org
www.iss-ssi.org