

B'Tselem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Right in the Occupied Territories
Gisha: Legal Center for Freedom of Movement
Association for Civil Rights in Israel
Physicians for Human Rights
Public Committee against Torture in Israel
HaMoked: Center for the Defence of the Individual
Bimkom – Planners for Planning Rights

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PRESS RELEASE

**Israeli rights groups condemn proposed state sanctions against Gaza civilians:
Cabinet decision will impose collective punishment on a
civilian population, lead to grave breach of International Law**

Seven Israeli human rights organizations jointly warn that yesterday's Cabinet decision to limit the electricity and fuel supply to the Gaza Strip and to further restrict movement in and out of Gaza will exacerbate the existing humanitarian crisis there. In addition, the sanctions constitute a grave breach of the foremost principle of international humanitarian law: the obligation to distinguish between combatants and civilians. In addition, the decision is liable to constitute a violation of one of the absolute prohibitions of international law: the ban on collective punishment. The coalition believes that these sanctions will also not prevent armed groups from launching rocket attacks on Israeli communities.

The Israeli Cabinet's claim that the proposed sanctions will not affect the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip is false. Limiting the electricity supply will drastically reduce the functioning capacity of hospitals and health clinics. In addition, limited electricity will reduce Gaza's water pumping system, and will cripple its sewage system and water supply. Thus, the Cabinet's decision not to cut Gaza's water supply is not a humane gesture because the other sanctions will effectively diminish it in any case.

The human rights organizations urge the Cabinet to reverse its decision to impose collective punishment on the Gaza Strip – a grave violation of international humanitarian law.

The coalition of human rights groups consists of: The Association for Civil Rights in Israel; Bimkom – Planners for Planning Rights; B'Tselem – the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories; Gisha: Legal Center for Freedom of Movement; HaMoked: The Center for the Defense of the Individual; Physicians for Human Rights; The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel.

For additional details:

Sarit Michaeli, B'Tselem Communications Director, +972(0)50-538-7230