



How Are Migrants' Rights Actors Responding to the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict?

A snapshot of perspectives and actions
from PICUM members since October 2023

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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
 Actions taken by PICUM members in Israel	 8
Hotline for Refugees and Migrants (HRM)	8
HIAS	9
Kav LaOved	10
 Actions taken by PICUM members in Europe	 11
Belgium	11
<i>Ciré</i>	11
Germany	12
<i>Flüchtlingsrat Niedersachsen e.V. (Refugee Council of Lower Saxony)</i>	12
Greece	12
<i>ARSIS (Association for the Social Support of Youth)</i>	12
Italy	13
<i>Naga (Organizzazione di volontariato per l'Assistenza Socio – Sanitaria e per i Diritti di Cittadini Stranieri, Rom e Sinti / Volunteer Organisation for Social and Health Care and for the Rights of Foreigners, Roma and Sinti Citizens)</i>	13
The Netherlands	13
<i>STIL Utrecht (Solidariteitsorganisatie Voor Mensen Zonder Verblijfsvergunning / Utrecht Solidarity Organisation for People Without Residence Permit)</i>	13
North Macedonia	13
<i>LEGIS</i>	13
Portugal	14
<i>UREP (Union of Refugees in Portugal)</i>	14
Spain	14
<i>Accem</i>	14
<i>Asociación Rumiñahui</i>	15
<i>Por Ti Mujer Association</i>	15
Switzerland	16
<i>APDH (Association Promotion des Droits de l'Homme)</i>	16
<i>SIT (Interprofessional Workers Union)</i>	16
European / International	17
<i>Pax Christi International</i>	17
<i>QCEA (Quaker Council for European Affairs)</i>	17
<i>European Federation of the Community of Sant'Egidio</i>	17
 Concluding Reflections	 18

Introduction

PICUM was established in 2001 to advocate for the rights of undocumented people at the EU and international levels and to provide a network for local organisations supporting people with precarious or irregular residence status.

Today, PICUM has 160 member organisations spread across 30 countries. They are incredibly diverse in terms of size, ways of working and focus and work in vastly different political and policy contexts. The issues they address include health and social services, decent work, children's rights, women's rights, justice and access to remedies, and fair and just migration pathways and policies (including efforts to end immigration-related detention and deportation). Some organisations are migrant- and refugee-led or work in partnership with communities. Almost all give direct support to affected people, whether legal advice, medical and social support, help to access the labour market, shelter and counselling, and push for changes in policies and practices at the local, national and European levels through advocacy or campaigning.

While the vast majority are based in Europe, some are based or operating in other regions, including Africa and the Middle East, including Israel, or work closely with sister or partner organisations elsewhere, including Palestine and Lebanon.

What PICUM members have in common is a shared mission to achieve social justice and human rights for undocumented people and a [commitment](#) to seeking "a world where human mobility is recognised as a normal reality, and where all people are guaranteed their human rights and have a dignified standard of living, regardless of migration status."

The aim of this briefing is to bring visibility to how PICUM's network has responded to the current manifestation of the Israel-Palestine conflict and its attendant violence and devastation, in a way that is grounded in PICUM's members' experiences, perspectives and work. Most of what is presented here concerns actions taken by PICUM members since 7 October 2023.

Box 1: A snapshot of where we are now

On 7 October 2023, Hamas-led attacks killed an estimated 1,200 people in Israel and led to more than 250 people being kidnapped and taken to Gaza as hostages. It is [believed](#) that nearly 100 hostages are still held by Hamas, with two thirds of whom are thought to still be alive.

On 8 October 2023, Israel [declared war](#) against Hamas. More than 300 days of military actions in Palestinian territories (and beyond) have reportedly since killed [more than](#) 40,000 Palestinians, [16,456 of them children](#), and left an [estimated half of the buildings](#) in Gaza damaged and one quarter destroyed, including schools, hospitals, homes, and places of worship. While international press has been [barred from reporting](#) from within Gaza, local journalists and ordinary people, as well as humanitarian and intergovernmental actors have given the world a devastating picture of the death and destruction that has resulted from the ongoing military actions of the Israeli Defence Forces and blockade. Israel received military support from several countries, notably the [United States and Germany](#). Technologies funded by the European Union [have also been utilised by Israel](#) in their military operations in Gaza.

The Israeli attacks and blockade on Gaza have meant "[acute food insecurity](#)" for 2.1 million people (96% of the population), [lack of safe water](#) to bathe and drink, and higher risks of vaccine-preventable diseases, including [polio](#). UN bodies and international organisations have deemed Palestine and Gaza specifically "the most dangerous place in the world" for [children](#), [women](#), [journalists](#), [aid workers](#), and [civilians](#) overall.

Following a case brought by South Africa, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) [ruled](#) in January 2024 that South Africa had made a plausible case that the acts of genocide were being committed against Palestinians and, because of the risk of irreparable harm, ordered Israel to take steps to prevent the commission of acts prohibited under the Genocide Convention until the case is fully resolved on its merits. In July 2024, the ICJ issued an [advisory opinion](#) ruling that Israel's occupation of the Gaza strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is unlawful, noting that its related legislation and measures violate the international prohibition against racial segregation and apartheid.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has its roots in [nearly a century of struggle](#) in the region following British rule and the creation of Israel. Some PICUM members are long-standing peace and conflict resolution organisations working for peace and justice in the region. Several members – especially those based in Israel and those operating in Palestine or neighbouring countries, like Lebanon – also have decades of experience concerning the situation of Palestinians both in Israel and Europe.

The following pages share accounts, in members' words, of their responses and reflections. These include the very practical ways current and expected realities have affected their daily operations, work with people who have been displaced, including Palestinians, as well as provision of humanitarian and social support, advocacy, campaigning and mobilisation work. Multiple joint policy statements

demand an immediate ceasefire, among other calls, and advocacy is being carried out at local and national levels both Israel and in European countries, towards the EU and towards the international community.

These accounts are based on direct exchanges with members or summaries of input they shared in group discussions. The examples provided are in no way an exhaustive treatment of the work that PICUM members are doing on the subject, nor the full impact of the ongoing conflict and violence on them as individuals or organisations.

We wish to thank all the PICUM members who generously shared their organisation's experiences, perspectives and actions, and who continue to do important work to support individuals and call out injustice.

Box 2: Petitions and open letters

PICUM members have responded in a variety of ways to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including by using their voices in the months since October 2023 to launch or endorse petitions and open letters with various demands:

- 10 October 2023 (also on 29 February 2024) - **Spanish Commission for Justice and Peace (Spain)** issued various [statements](#) strongly condemning the Israeli military offensives on Gazan civilians and calling for the upholding of international legal standards.
- 17 October 2023 - **Immigrant Council of Ireland (Ireland)** endorsed the [Open Letter from Irish civil society organisations for peace in Gaza](#) condemning the violence of the Hamas attacks and the Israeli government genocidal rhetoric, and calling for a halt of the EU sending military aid to Israel and for social media corporations headquartered in Ireland to stop the spread of online disinformation.
- 18 October 2023 - **Greek Council for Refugees (Greece)** signed, along with over 800 NGOs (including **ARSIS**), the petition [#CeasefireNow: Open Call for an Immediate Ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and Israel](#) aimed at the UN Security Council and heads of states. The petition gathered over a million signatures.
- 25 October 2023 - **Solidarity Now (Greece)** also published a joint statement entitled [Appeal-Even War Has Rules](#) with 24 civil society organisations, signed by PICUM member **ARSIS**

(Association for the Social Support of Youth) (Greece), calling for immediate intervention by the international community to bring about an immediate ceasefire and to ensure peace in the region.

- 2 November 2023 - **Aditus (Malta)** signed the letter [*Malta's role in the United Nations and the genocide in Gaza*](#) signed by more than 500 individuals addressed to Maltese Prime Minister, calling on Malta to use its position in the UN Security Council to call for an "immediate end to the Israeli aggression in Gaza".
- 11 November 2023 - **Physicians for Social Responsibility (Finland)** launched the petition [*Doctors and medical students call for ceasefire in Gaza*](#). More than 700 signatures were received, and the petition was handed to Minister Valtonen's Special Adviser in January 2024. In March 2024, the organisation also released the statement [*There is a humanitarian emergency in Gaza*](#).
- 13 November 2023 - **HIAS** published a statement [*Sustaining Life Amid the Devastation*](#) condemning the cruelty of the Hamas attacks from 7 October and calling for the release of hostages, and expressing concerns about civilians' suffering in Gaza. Since January 2024, HIAS published the statements [*Hunger and Devastation: A Moral Call to Action*](#), [*Jewish Values Demand the World Averts a Famine*](#) and [*How to Help Civilians in Gaza*](#) condemning the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. HIAS has also noted the Israeli government's complete neglect of the conflict's impact on asylum seekers and filed a petition to ensure that asylum seekers receive the same benefits as internally displaced Israelis.
- 17 November 2023 - **Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (Finland)** released a joint statement entitled [*Archbishop Tapio Luoma, Bishop Kaisamari Hintikka and Finn Church Aid call for a ceasefire in Gaza*](#), urging the international community and the Finnish government to defend international humanitarian law. They also published several peace statements regarding the situation in the Middle East.
- 22 November 2023 - **JRS Malta (Malta)** and **Aditus Foundation** co-authored an [*open letter to the European Parliament \(alongside 3 other organisations\)*](#), calling for an immediate ceasefire to protect the remaining innocent civilians in Gaza, including journalists.
- 29 November 2023 - International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People - **Generation 2.0 RED (Greece)** shared the [*testimony*](#) of Nesma, a Palestinian refugee in Greece.
- 19 December 2023 - **European Sex Workers Rights Alliance (ESWA) (Europe)** stressed the impact of the conflict on sex workers In their [*2023 End of Year Statement*](#). Several sex workers were killed in the attacks of 7 October, and a number of Palestinian sex workers have disappeared following Israel's military actions in Gaza.
- 5 April 2024 - **KISA (Cyprus)** released a press release [*Refugees are not "invaders" but people who deserve protection*](#), which denounced the negative framing of refugees from the Middle East by the Cyprus government, and called for the government and Parliament to expressly condemn the murders of civilians and human rights defenders by the Israeli Army.
- 5 April 2024 - **"Movement for Peace " (Movimiento por la Paz, Spain)** published the manifesto [*NGOs again demand ceasefire in Gaza and guarantee of humanitarian access*](#), which was signed by 13 organisations calling for a ceasefire and for the guaranteeing of humanitarian access to the Palestinian people.
- 15 May 2024 - **SIT (Syndicat interprofessionnel de travailleuses et travailleurs, Switzerland)** joined a [*press release*](#) by the Geneva Trade Union Community expression solidarity with students who were violently evicted from their peaceful encampment at the University of Geneva and urged the Swiss State Council to protect freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

- 10 June 2024 - **Anti Slavery International** published the article [Human rights must be upheld in times of conflict](#), notably calling for a ceasefire and the unobstructed delivery of humanitarian aid, and warning the international community of "the risks of human trafficking and slavery as a result of the ongoing aggression in Gaza".
- 20 June 2024 - World Refugee Day - Several PICUM members issued calls condemning Israel's indiscriminate attacks against Palestinian civilians, which have led to forced displacement. They also called for enhanced protection of asylum seekers, including Palestinians.
 - » **Foundation CEPAIM (Spain)**: [30 years working for refugees and intercultural coexistence](#)
 - » **SOS Racismo Gipuzkoa (Basque Country, Spain)**: [Let us be a refugee. Welcoming without discrimination](#)
 - » **Red Acoge (Spain)**: [Red Acoge demands effective, forceful and immediate measures to stop the genocide in Gaza](#)
- 13 August 2024: **KISA (Cyprus)** signed the [Joint Letter to the Greek government](#) to take action against the Overseas Santorini and the Overseas Sun Coast, two US ships transporting military fuel for Israeli. The Letter, co-signed by more than 50 organisations/groups in Greece and Cyprus, was part of the [No Harbour for Genocide campaign](#).

Actions taken by PICUM members in Israel

PICUM has three members based in Israel: Hotline for Migrants and Refugees, HIAS Israel and Kav LaOved. While each has their specific focus, they work closely together and have been coordinating closely in their response to 7 October

and subsequent violence. Their work with asylum seekers, migrant workers and Palestinians is longstanding. The below provides some examples of their work in recent months.

Hotline for Refugees and Migrants (HRM)

HRM is an Israeli organisation providing legal assistance to migrants and refugees in Israel, particularly those in immigration detention centres. Hotline also advocates for human rights-based legislation on migration in Israel.

With the conflict having devastating impacts on Palestinian and Israeli civilians, many of HRM's staff have demonstrated weekly to call for a ceasefire.

Hotline has been particularly focused on the situation of migrants who have been taken hostage or lost their lives, and their families. Migrant workers have been heavily affected by events of the past months, though there has been little attention to their plight. After the attacks of 7 October 2023, five thousand migrants were evacuated by authorities from Israel, including migrant workers with a work permit, undocumented migrant workers and their families, students, and asylum seekers.

Hamas' attacks on 7 October were indiscriminate and affected both Israelis and non-Jewish migrants in the Gaza envelope, a rural area home to thousands of migrant workers. About five percent of the victims murdered on 7 October massacre were migrants, exceeding the proportion of migrant workers in Israel and demonstrating both their vulnerability and Hamas's brutality. Sixty-six migrant workers were murdered, including two Eritreans and one Sudanese national who were residing in Israel under group protection.

During the first ceasefire agreement between 24 and 30 November 2023, Hamas released twenty-four Thai and Filipino hostages. Released hostages described Hamas' disproportionate [ill treatment](#) of foreign hostages. According to official sources and accounts of migrant communities, as of September 2024, ten¹ migrant workers were still being held hostage by Hamas in Gaza, including eight Thai nationals, one Nepalese and one Tanzanian national. Seven hostages² (six Thai nationals and one Nepalese) are presumed to be alive.

Due to the Israeli government's dismissive attitude towards Hamas's foreign victims, HRM has been actively engaged with migrant communities and victims' relatives, visiting the wounded, gathering victims' information, liaising with Israeli authorities, and [assisting the victims in exercising their rights](#). HRM's [legal representation enabled](#) six undocumented migrants to be recognized by the Israeli state as "Victims of Hostile Action," making them eligible for state compensation.

As part of the effort to ensure the recognition of migrant worker victims by Israeli society, on 5 June 2024, HMR organised a tribute to foreign caregivers who remained by the sides of their patients during the Hamas attack, in some cases, at the cost of their lives. In total, seven foreign caregivers were murdered on October 7th.

1 The Israeli police is currently investigating the case of Kiattisak Chansomkoi, a missing Thai national, who has been missing since October 7th and is plausibly another hostage and presumed alive.

2 This figure includes Kiattisak Chansomkoi, who is a missing person.

HRM continues to work for the release of the remaining migrant workers held hostage by Hamas, for the Israeli government to comply with its obligations under international law, and for the

Israeli public to acknowledge that migrant workers are an integral part of the Israeli society.

Box 3: The names of migrant hostages held by Hamas³

Hamas migrant hostages presumed to be alive	Hamas migrant hostages found dead	Missing migrant plausibly held hostage by Hamas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bipin Joshi, 23 years old, from Nepal • Nattapong Pinta, 35 years old, from Thailand • Pongsak Tanna, 35 years old, from Thailand • Sathian Suwankam, 34 years old, from Thailand • Watchara Sriaoun, 32 years old, from Thailand • Surasak Lamnau, 30 years old, from Thailand • Bannawat Saethao, 27 years old, from Thailand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joshua Loitu Mollel, 21 years old, from Tanzania • Sonthaya Akasri, 30 years old, from Thailand • Suthisak Rintalak, 43 years old, from Thailand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kiattisak Chansomkoi, from Thailand

HIAS

HIAS is a Jewish organisation providing support to refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people. HIAS has branches across the globe, including in Tel Aviv, Israel.

The Hamas-led attacks in October 2023 had a significant impact on the wellbeing and sense of safety of HIAS staff in Tel Aviv. HIAS had to find ways to ensure the safety of both their staff and the people they serve.

HIAS has worked in Israel for more than 70 years, since the outbreak of the war they have been focused on ensuring the safety and rights of displaced people in Israel as well as asylum seekers and refugees. With over 200,000 persons internally displaced within Israel after the attacks, including

asylum seekers, HIAS launched an [emergency response team](#) to provide basic assistance to the most vulnerable among the displaced people, including cash-based assistance and basic supplies, mental health support, and legal aid.

Additionally, since the beginning of the conflict, many LGBTQ Palestinian asylum seekers had their visas cancelled and [fear for their lives if deported to the West Bank](#). HIAS has filed numerous petitions on their behalf.

While not operating in Gaza, HIAS has promoted support of organisations providing life-saving aid to civilians caught in the crossfire, such as the Catholic Relief Services and Global Communities.

³ These estimates were last updated in August 2024.

Kav LaOved

Kav LaOved is a non-profit organisation committed to uphold full and equal labour rights for all workers in the Israeli labour market. They protect the rights of the most marginalized workers through individual assistance, policy efforts and legal advocacy.

Since its onset more than thirty years ago, Kav LaOved has supported Palestinian workers experiencing discrimination and advocated to the Israeli government for Palestinian workers to be considered as equals to Israelis. Before October 7th, over 100,000 Palestinians worked in Israel, with a significant proportion of skilled workers seeking employment there due to *the lack of employment opportunities* and to significant wage disparities between Israel and the West Bank. Since October 7th, however all Palestinian workers have been barred from accessing their work in Israel due to 'security concerns.' Palestinian workers from Gaza have been particularly affected by Israel's response, as Israel has detained some 4,000 Palestinians since October 7, according to official figures, though roughly 1,500 were released after the military determined they were not affiliated with Hamas, resulting in the deaths of several Gazan workers. Despite these challenges, Kav LaOved continues to support affected Palestinian workers and

highlights the consequences of barring Palestinian workers from earning a livelihood, exposing them to heightened vulnerability, poverty, and despair.

Kav LaOved has also criticized the "historical replacement" of Palestinian workers with migrant workers, a trend that began in the 1990s and has accelerated since October 7th. This shift has led to an increased reliance on migrant workers, especially those placed in dangerous border areas (mainly in Northern Israel) from which citizens are being evacuated. This situation is leading to increased exploitation of workers and human trafficking, including the collection of brokerage fees and the employment of students under conditions akin to slavery.

Kav LaOved regularly publishes newsletters to inform the public about these issues. For example, in February 2024, their newsletter entitled "We Must Talk About Palestinian Workers" provided an in-depth analysis of the continued discrimination of Palestinian workers. In April 2024, to mark Passover, Kav LaOved issued a statement highlighting the "unprecedented wave of workers' rights violations" resulting from the exceptional taken during the state of emergency.

Actions taken by PICUM members in Europe

Belgium

Ciré

CIRÉ (Coordinations et Initiatives pour Réfugiés et Étrangers) defends the rights of people in exile, whether or not they have residency status.

The events of October 2023 and the situation in Gaza have had a clear impact on the need for international protection for Palestinian nationals in Belgium. It should be noted that Palestinians were the third most common nationality to apply for asylum in Belgium in 2022 and 2023. In the first seven months of 2024, they were the first most represented nationality.

In October 2023, the Commissariat Général aux Réfugiés et aux Apatrides (CGRA) announced the freezing of certain decisions concerning Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank, citing the lack of 'sufficient objective information to accurately assess the security situation in the Palestinian Territories'.

In December 2023, CIRÉ published an [open letter](#) signed by 22 organisations denouncing the inaction and cynicism of the Belgian authorities.

CIRÉ criticised the lack of evacuation measures for people with a right of residence in Belgium who are stranded in Gaza, as well as the enormous difficulties, if any, in applying for visas for people living in Gaza who wish to join their families in Belgium.

CIRÉ also deplores the lack of reception and care for Palestinian asylum seekers during the asylum procedure, leaving many people, mainly single men,

without accommodation and therefore homeless.

The organisation also criticises the freezing of decisions to refuse asylum applications by the CGRA, due to an alleged lack of information to assess the security situation in Palestine. CIRÉ has also analysed the harmful consequences of this freeze in an [analysis](#) and has called on the CGRA on several occasions to ensure that Palestinians are quickly granted international protection status.

At the end of 2023, the CGRA announced the resumption of the processing of all the files, specifying that the situation in Gaza clearly indicated a need for protection, but that an individual and detailed examination would take place. At the end of May 2024, the CGRA informed Palestinian asylum seekers that the deadline for processing their applications had been extended and that a decision could not be expected for another 21 months. CIRÉ strongly deplores this situation, which was highlighted in a [press release](#) on World Refugee Day.

CIRÉ also denounces the abusive practices of the Aliens Office, namely the withdrawal of Belgian nationality from children born in Belgium to Palestinian parents and the refusal to grant family reunification on this basis.

Finally, CIRÉ is also concerned about the mental health of Palestinian asylum seekers left homeless in Brussels and co-signed an [open letter](#) to this effect in May 2024.

Germany

Flüchtlingsrat Niedersachsen e.V. (Refugee Council of Lower Saxony)

The Refugee Council of Lower Saxony is a human rights organisation advocating for stronger protection of refugee rights in German and under international law.

Following contact with individuals with relatives living in Gaza and unable to leave, in November 2023, [the Refugee Council of Lower Saxony issued an appeal to the federal and state governments](#) to advocate for an "evacuation program at least for sick and injured people in need of protection from the Gaza Strip", and called for the German government to coordinate with the Länder the admission of civilian internally displaced persons, in particular those injured, and to negotiate implementation with the governments of Israel and Egypt, in particular for individuals holding German passports or residence permits, or who have relatives in Germany. The [German government](#)

[nonetheless rejected the proposal to create an admission program for Gaza](#) that might be inspired by the Canadian admission system for Canadian citizens and permanent residents affected by the war in Gaza.

In March 2024, the Refugee Council of Lower Saxony condemned the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees' suspension of asylum procedures started by the Higher Administrative Court of the State of Saxony-Anhalt, thus leaving many Gazans seeking asylum in limbo. The Refugee Council of Lower Saxony also called for the granting of a visa-free stay to all Palestinians living in Germany on a visit or a work visa after their visa expiry, as it exists for Israeli nationals living in Germany, because it is impossible for them to return to their country of origin for an unforeseeable period.

Greece

ARSIS (Association for the Social Support of Youth)

ARSIS Association for the Social Support of Youth is a Greece-based Non-Governmental Organization dedicated to promoting the rights of children and young people. ARSIS provides critical support to vulnerable youth, empowering them to advocate for their rights. Additionally, the organization engages in policy advocacy at both national and international levels to promote the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Prior to October 7th, ARSIS was actively involved in supporting Palestinian refugees. Dozens of children - applicants for international protection from Palestine - [have been accommodated](#) in the shelters for unaccompanied children that ARSIS operates. Among other things, as a partner in the "All Children in Education" initiative, launched by UNICEF Greece and co-funded by the European

Commission, ARSIS assisted a family of Palestinian refugees who arrived on the island of Samos, specifically by facilitating the children's integration into Greek educational systems.

After October 7th, ARSIS was one of the first organizations to raise the issue of child protection in light of what was taking place in Gaza. As a result of the above, on October 25th, 2023, ARSIS signed a [joint petition of the Advocacy Network for Children's Rights](#) fiercely condemning "the war in Gaza and Israël", in particular the mass "killing, mutilations and abductions of children, as well as the attacks on schools and social infrastructure such as hospitals, water and electricity infrastructure", and reiterating the breaches of the Geneva Convention and violations of international humanitarian law by both parties in the conflict

Italy

Naga (*Organizzazione di volontariato per l'Assistenza Socio – Sanitaria e per i Diritti di Cittadini Stranieri, Rom e Sinti* / Volunteer Organisation for Social and Health Care and for the Rights of Foreigners, Roma and Sinti Citizens)

Naga is a voluntary-based organisation in Milan providing free health, legal and social assistance to undocumented migrants and asylum seekers. The organisation also engages in advocacy efforts with regional, national and European government institutions. In January 2024, health professionals volunteering for Naga issued a [statement](#) condemning Israeli attacks on hospitals and healthcare facilities in Gaza, emphasising the importance of adhering to international medical standards and humanitarian law. In an [open statement](#), Naga paid tribute to the Gazan civilians suffering from famine, water shortages, and bombings, as well as those taken hostages killed by the Hamas.

Moreover, as an anti-racist organisation opposing what it calls Palestine's "apartheid and military occupation since 1967", Naga called for a [boycott of medications produced by the Israeli company TEVA](#) and its subsidiary Rathiofarm. This boycott involves halting the purchase of Teva-branded drugs until a negotiated resolution to the conflict is pursued.

During the Pride 2024 march, Naga launched the "[My House, Your House, What's the Difference?](#)" campaign, which demands an end to borders, colonialism and apartheid, as well as a ceasefire in Gaza, an end of the genocide and a free Palestine.

The Netherlands

STIL Utrecht (*Solidariteitsorganisatie Voor Mensen Zonder Verblijfsvergunning* / Utrecht Solidarity Organisation for People Without Residence Permit)

STIL Utrecht provides support to undocumented migrants in the Netherlands. In a [special newsletter](#), STIL Utrecht shared the testimony of a Palestinian individual who STIL Utrecht used to accompany, who had lived in the Netherlands for 8 years. Due to the temporary nature of his residence permit,

he would have only been eligible to bring his family living in Gaza to the Netherlands in 2025. In October 2023, his family was killed by Israeli bombardments. STIL Utrecht criticised the Dutch government for failing to vote for a UN resolution on a humanitarian ceasefire.

North Macedonia

LEGIS

LEGIS is a non-governmental organisation based in North Macedonia that focuses on delivering humanitarian aid in countries affected by war or natural disasters, particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

Since late October 2023, LEGIS [publicly expressed](#) deep concern about the suffering of Gazan civilians and joined international humanitarian aid initiatives to Gaza through their partner organization, the Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH).

LEGIS has called for donations to support humanitarian aid in Gaza and participated in a Macedonian convoy delivering food aid. Notably, LEGIS collected 70,000 EUR in donations [for Iftars during Ramadan](#), enabling IHH to send [about 19,177 hot meals](#) to Gazans through humanitarian corridors via Turkey. LEGIS, along with twelve other NGOs, has also called on Macedonian authorities to send humanitarian and medical aid to Gaza and to advocate for an end to the hostilities.

LEGIS urged subsequent rehabilitation and free treatment of children from Gaza who have lost limbs. This effort follows a similar initiative from the previous year, which involved organising a peaceful transfer of children from Gaza to Slovenia and providing them with physical and psychological support.

Advocacy resulted in a meeting with North Macedonian president Stevo Pendarovski on 4 January 2024. The President welcomed the humanitarian activities of LEGIS, as an act of

solidarity from Macedonian citizens, but expressed regret that Macedonian diplomacy does not have the freedom to freely decide on this issue.

In June 2024, Legis collected 56,000 euros for 280 qurbans (animals used in ritual sacrifices during Eid al-Adha) for Gaza, a project realised again in partnership with IHH.

Together with the coalition of 12 organisations, Legis has organised several protests and public performances for Gaza.

Portugal

UREP (Union of Refugees in Portugal)

UREP is a community group run by refugees and for refugees' inclusion in Portuguese society.

UREP has been actively engaged in advocacy and awareness campaigns aimed at highlighting the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and calling for peaceful resolutions. Several events and campaigns have been organised in collaboration with other local NGOs and community groups, to raise awareness about the ongoing conflict and its impact on civilians. UREP has also been part of the public demonstrations and informational webinars featuring experts on Middle Eastern politics and human rights.

UREP has been working closely with Palestinian communities in Portugal to provide support and resources during this difficult time. This includes legal assistance, psychological support, and community integration programs. Efforts also aim to help Palestinian refugees and migrants navigate the challenges they face, away from families in Palestine, particularly in light of the recent escalations. Safe spaces have been created for these communities to share their experiences and connect with others who understand their struggles.

Spain

Accem

Accem worked with Palestinian refugees prior to 7 October, by providing reception, legal and psychological support, and labour and social inclusion, according to individual needs.

Accem started running the "Gaza Project" in early 2024, funded by the Directorate-General of Spanish Citizens Abroad and Return Policies of the Spanish Ministry for Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, and aimed at Spanish citizens returning from Gaza. In early 2024, the project involved a total of 119 people (73 of whom had Spanish nationality), mostly women (54%) and children (43%). Accem provides reception, legal assistance, Spanish lessons, access

to the job market, as well as access to other services, with the aim of fostering their reintegration. As of 14 August 2024, for people participating in the project who did not have Spanish nationality, three had been granted subsidiary protection, one was granted international protection, and 18 applied for international protection, while the other four applied for residence permits and Spanish nationality. Twenty were undocumented. However, it is important to note that, since the beginning of the project, the administrative situation of some beneficiaries has changed, or may change.

In June 2024, following an appeal by the World

Health Organisation, the Spanish Government announced the setting up of a special mechanism for the reception and health care of Gazan children affected by oncological pathologies or severe trauma resulting from the war, accompanied by their families or guardians. This is a coordinated action mechanism through the Emergency Response Coordination Centre, in which several ministries participate: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation; the Ministry of the Interior; the Ministry of Defence; the Ministry of Health; and the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration. The MISSM (Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration), through the Directorate General of Migration Management of the Secretariat of State for Migration, will manage the reception and psychosocial care of children and their families in Spain, a task that has been entrusted to Accem under the Cunina Project ("Psychosocial care for families with children in need of urgent health care from Gaza"). The main objective is to promote the welfare of children and their families in Spain, guaranteeing the coverage of basic needs and psychosocial accompaniment, facilitating the development and provision of relevant social

care. Accem will manage the provision of different services and actions for the children and their families: temporary shelter; accommodation, food and coverage of basic needs; comprehensive care: information and guidance, social accompaniment; psychological care; legal support; translation and interpretation services.

Patients and their families arrived in Spain on 24 July 2024 from Cairo (Egypt), and the project is expected to last approximately three months. The project is aimed at a group of 12 Gazan families whose children require urgent health care due to serious pathologies (cancer patients and severe trauma). There are 43 people: 16 patients (15 children and one adult), and 27 accompanying persons. Patients will be cared for in hospitals in the regions of the Basque Country (Barakaldo and Donostia), Castilla-La Mancha (Toledo), Asturias (Oviedo), Navarre (Pamplona) and Madrid (Gómez Ulla Central Defence Hospital). Accem will accompany and provide psychosocial care to children and their families through specialised teams, coordinated from the organisation's headquarters in Madrid.

Asociación Rumiñahui

Asociación Rumiñahui is a non-governmental organisation of migrants based in Spain that defends and champions the rights of people on the move, by facilitating their inclusion and through efforts to improve their quality of life. Actions are based on human rights, solidarity and the search for equal opportunities for people, regardless of their race, religion, origin or ideology.

As an organisation working for the protection of immigrants in Spain, Rumiñahui participated in rallies and marches calling for an end to the violence in Gaza. Rumiñahui welcomed the position of the Spanish government recognising the Palestinian State. Rumiñahui is working to form alliances with organisations in the Arab world to support Spain's strategy to achieve peace, and to condemn the ongoing war.

Por Ti Mujer Association

The mission of Por Ti Mujer Association is focused on combating the structural causes that generate inequality and limit the exercise of women's and girls' rights. One of the strategies is to raise public awareness about the different global phenomena, giving a voice to those who are being victimised and putting the emerging attention to human rights issues at the top of the international agenda. That is why the organisation participated in the "Human Chain for Palestine", organised by the Valencia with Palestine platform, held on 12 May 2024, whose objective was to express our solidarity

and demand a halt to the barbarity that is taking the lives and violating the rights of thousands of people. This massive activity with great symbolic content aimed to make visible that the end of the war and the reparation of its victims is a public demand that has arisen worldwide.

Por Ti Mujer published a report entitled "the silenced violence that afflicts Palestinian women", highlighting in figures that the intensification of pre-existing vulnerabilities in situations of armed conflict gives way to extreme forms of violence against

women and girls. Mainly sexual violence is used as a weapon of war and the female body becomes a battlefield. However, the structural discrimination that underlies the social system makes these brutal practices invisible and undervalues them. Therefore, their research calls for the incorporation of a gender perspective as a tool that places the needs of women and girls at the heart of decision-

making at all stages, during and post-conflict, including social rehabilitation and peacebuilding.

Finally, we ratify our commitment to actively participate in all spaces of public discussion and debate, in fulfilment of our primary objective of achieving social justice from different spaces of intervention.

Switzerland

APDH (Association Promotion des Droits de l'Homme)

The Association pour la Promotion des Droits Humains (APDH) works with migrants from the Middle East and North Africa to help them integrate into the host society.

One of the major impacts of the conflict is on the mental health of refugees, whose families are living under the bombs or have died. The greatest difficulty for refugees is the impossibility of

supporting their family members financially, as all channels are blocked, not to mention the sense of injustice they feel.

APDH is sounding the alarm that this situation makes refugees and all family members, including children, vulnerable and calls on states receiving refugees to take this vulnerability into account.

SIT (Interprofessional Workers Union)

The Syndicat interprofessionnel des travailleuses et travailleurs (SIT) has condemned the Hamas attacks of 7 October, as well as the subsequent Israeli military actions in Gaza, targeting homes, schools and hospitals. The SIT also criticised the Swiss government for justifying the violence of the Israeli military actions in Gaza in the name of an alleged 'Israeli right to defend itself'. The union denounced the 'apartheid' regime imposed by the Israeli government and affirmed its commitment to the fundamental trade union values of solidarity with oppressed people, opposing all forms of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

The SIT supported and called on its members to take part in several demonstrations in Geneva, some of which passed in front of the UN headquarters, calling for an immediate ceasefire, international protection for Palestinians, an end to genocide, and urging the International Criminal Court to issue an arrest warrant against Israeli leaders. It also supported the holding of a conference

organised by the Collectif Urgence Palestine on the destruction of the health system in Gaza, and denounced Switzerland's decision to stop funding UNRWA.

The SIT is also a member of the Communauté genevoise d'action syndicale (CGAS), which supported the peaceful occupation of the University of Geneva hall by students, staff and professors to denounce the violence committed by the Israeli army in Gaza. The CGAS stood alongside the occupiers to call on the University to take a stand against the destruction of academic institutions in Gaza and the repression suffered by Palestinian staff. It also called for an end to the University's collaboration with Israeli academic institutions, and for Palestinian students to be welcomed and supported. Following the expulsion of the occupiers by the police, the CGAS denounced this repression and urged the Geneva Council of State to protect freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and peaceful social protest.

European / International

Pax Christi International

Pax Christi International is a Catholic peace movement with 120 member organisations across the globe. [It is deeply committed to a Just Peace in the Holy Land](#). Pax Christi International advocates for reconciliation by giving voice to both Palestinians and Israelis, fostering dialogue and promoting peaceful coexistence and justice in the region.

Pax Christi International supports local initiatives in Israel and Palestine, focusing on nonviolent resistance (*Sumud*) and human rights through peace-building workshops, educational programmes, and interfaith dialogues, together with its members.

Migration from the West Bank is a major issue, with many young people fleeing due to severe restrictions, lack of opportunities, and safety

threats. Pax Christi International is active in calling for international support to address the root causes of the conflict and therefore in relation to these forms of migration and provision of safer alternatives.

Pax Christi International is concerned about the worsening situations in Gaza and the West Bank, where violence and displacement create dire conditions. In early May, [Pax Christi International showcased local voices to raise awareness and mobilise international solidarity](#).

At the UN and EU, Pax Christi International advocates for human rights and international law, seeking to influence decision-makers to end the occupation and promote lasting peace.

QCEA (Quaker Council for European Affairs)

The Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) advocates for "a vision based on the Quaker commitment to peace, justice and equality to Europe and its institutions", seeking support for humane, non-military policies at the EU level, inside and outside its borders.

Quaker organisations, groups and individuals have been actively working for peace in Israel and Palestine for more than 100 years. There is a small Quaker community in Ramallah and long-standing Quaker projects continue running such as Ramallah Friends School, in operation in the West Bank since 1869; and the United Kingdom and Ireland component of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)

managed by Quakers in Britain. American Friends Service Committee and Quaker Service Norway provide relief to people in Gaza.

As an organisation that focuses exclusively on advocacy and dialogue at the EU level, QCEA signed a [statement](#) alongside other Quaker agencies calling for all actors to make concerted efforts to work towards peace. In addition to disseminating the statement, QCEA tried to seek opportunities to bring attention to the situation in the areas that intersect with its programmatic work, such as challenging the increasing militarisation of the EU, and the growing disregard for the right to conscientious objection to military service.

European Federation of the Community of Sant'Egidio

The European Federation of the Community of Sant'Egidio is a Christian community present in over 70 countries striving for peace and to "protect the poor". Along with other associations, Italian members of the Sant'Egidio community [welcomed several families of Palestinian refugees](#) evacuated from Gaza, and provided them with accommodation, medical support, and accompanied children in attending school. Italian Sant'Egidio members

also worked on facilitating family reunion for the children who arrived on their own.

Besides a delegation of Sant'Egidio from Italy, Ukraine, Germany, Spain and Belgium [visited Jerusalem and Bethlehem in July 2024](#) and met with relatives of the Hamas' hostages as well as Palestinian students from the Catholic University of Bethlehem in order to foster inter-faith solidarity.

Concluding Reflections

This compilation of the diverse experiences and actions of PICUM members, both within Israel and across Europe, is not meant to be exhaustive. Instead, it offers a snapshot of the ongoing situation, and its connection to migrant justice through the wide range of actions taken by the PICUM network.

In April 2024, PICUM held calls with its members, and beginning in July 2024, initiated a series of bimonthly calls to provide a space for members to share how the Israel-Palestinian conflict affects them and discuss their responses.

Responses to the conflict by the EU and European government also highlight intersections with PICUM's ongoing EU advocacy, such as the restriction of Palestinian solidarity movements and resulting shrinking civil space, and the lack of international protection for Palestinian refugees, which contributes to the creation of undocumented Palestinian migrants in Europe. PICUM will incorporate these issues into its relevant advocacy work towards the new European Commission and Members of the European Parliament. Bottom of Form



PICUM

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for social justice.

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