



Türkiye Barolar Birliđi Başkanlıđı

Sayı: 41870694-730.01

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Dear President,

The conflict between Israel and Palestine, which started on October 7, 2023, has reached the grim milestone with the disproportionate use of force by Israel. As the 14 days of the conflict have passed, civilian Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip have been forced to leave their homes and deprived of even the most basic needs due to the blockade imposed. During the clashes, civilian settlements were bombed and destroyed, including the Palestinian Bar Association's compound in Gaza and the Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital, where hundreds of civilian children, women and patients lost their lives.

The conflict violates international humanitarian law.

- Forced displacement of civilians threatens the "right to life, liberty and security of person" enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).
- The Fourth Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949 concerns the protection of civilians in time of war. Articles 16 to 22 of the Convention regulate the protection of civilians wounded in war, hospitals and their personnel. Similarly, Hague Convention of 1907 (Hague IV, Annex Article 27) states that in sieges and bombardments all necessary steps must be taken to protect hospitals not being used at the time for military purposes.
- Intentional attacks on non-military targets and civilian populations, attacks and bombings on personnel and settlements used in humanitarian services are listed as war crimes in Article 8 of the Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).
- Basic principles of The International Committee of the Red Cross set out the need to protect civilians and non-combatants.

In short, while the extent of civilian casualties indicates that this process can be considered within the scope of crimes against humanity; according to international legislation, war crimes are being committed in the region.

As the Union of Turkish Bar Associations, we call on all parties to act with restraint in accordance with the Rule of Law and international law. We invite international institutions and organizations to be a part of the solution in order to prevent the escalating violence in the region, to end the state of conflict, to identify war crimes and to carry out the process in accordance with the Rule of Law.

Sincerely yours,

R. Erinç SAĞKAN, Attorney at Law
President of Union of Turkish Bar Associations