



UNION OF MEDICAL  
RELIEF AND CARE  
ORGANIZATIONS



The Honourable Mélanie Joly  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Global Affairs Canada  
125 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa ON K1A 0G2

The Honourable Ahmed Hussen  
Minister of International Development

The Honourable Michael Chong  
Conservative Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs

MP Heather McPherson  
NDP Critic for Foreign Affairs and International Development

October 20, 2023

**Re: Canadian Charities Call for Canada to Demand a Ceasefire and Opening of Humanitarian Corridors to Save Lives**

Dear Minister Joly,

Since October 9th, Gaza has been under a full siege by Israel, depriving its residents of essential resources including food, water, and electricity. Moreover, there's been a continuous barrage on Gaza, targeting civilian homes indiscriminately. Disturbingly, ambulances and healthcare facilities, which serve as crucial lifelines in these challenging times, have also been under attack.

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is unprecedented. Countless individuals have been displaced within Gaza's borders, with the majority trapped with no safe exit. The death toll comprises thousands of

Palestinians, with numerous others injured. Hospitals are grappling with emergencies daily. A single strike on the Ahli Arab Hospital has alone claimed hundreds of lives.

From the onset of this crisis, we've endeavored to coordinate with local partners to distribute aid funded from Canadian donors. However, with each passing day, our efforts face escalating challenges. For instance, a recent airstrike decimated the warehouses of a local humanitarian partner, obliterating stocks of blankets and hygiene supplies, funded by Canadian charities. Tragically, two humanitarian workers from that site remain unaccounted for.

In another heart-wrenching incident, an HCI aid worker, amidst power cuts and dwindling battery life, messaged, "We did our best building the water well with your contributions. I hope our efforts were enough. If you don't hear from me again, please forgive any shortcomings."

One Islamic Relief worker on the ground warned, "There is nowhere safe for civilians in Gaza. People went south because of Israel's order but there is no shelter, no food, no water and the bombs are still falling. The bombing must stop or more civilians, including many children, will continue to die while the world watches. We feel like the international community has abandoned us." Many humanitarian workers, torn between searching for their families, ensuring their own safety, or aiding innocent victims, face gut-wrenching decisions daily.

While we appreciate Canada's pledge to consistently back UNRWA, which aids displaced civilians, mere funding is ineffective without the assurance of safe delivery.

We urge the Canadian Government:

1. Lobby for an immediate ceasefire.
2. Stand firm and demand rapid, safe and unimpeded access for the delivery of humanitarian personnel and relief into Gaza.
3. Demand that Israel respect the safety of humanitarian workers and humanitarian operational sites.
4. Increase the aid directed to Gaza.

The lives of numerous innocent civilians are contingent upon immediate and decisive action.

Sincerely,

Human Concern International

Islamic Relief Canada

Action for Humanity

Penny Appeal Canada

ICNA Relief

Union of Medical Care and Relief Organizations (UOSSM)

Refugee Girls Worldwide

Children of Islamic Nations Inc.

International Development and Relief Foundation

Relieve Humanity International

**About Human Concern International (HCI):**

Human Concern International (HCI) was established in 1980, registered with the Canadian Revenue Agency as a federally recognized charity in 1983, and is Canada's first and oldest Muslim charity. We began our operations in 1979 in Pakistan, assisting Afghan refugees fleeing the war. Since then, we have delivered over \$200 million of aid across the globe. Entrenched in all our work is our vision for a world without poverty and injustice. Since its inception, HCI has provided humanitarian aid and development support to tens of millions of individuals and families around the world as per our mission to save lives and move people from crises to sustainability through emergency response, education, healthcare, livelihoods, water and sanitation, and child sponsorship programs. For HCI, charity starts at home, and we uplift our community in both times of need and celebration.

For more information on HCI, visit <https://humanconcern.org/>