International Civil society statement: Restore Telecoms and Internet Connectivity in Gaza Now!

The [MENA Alliance for Digital Rights](#) and other civil society organizations condemn, in the strongest terms, Israel's targeting of the means of communication and access to information in Gaza. We are deeply alarmed by Israel's cutting-off of [civilian telecommunication infrastructure](#), internet, [electricity](#), mainstream media, [journalists](#), and human rights defenders.

Israel is currently holding 2.3 million Palestinians captive in Gaza, amid a near-total internet and power blackout. In less than two weeks, [Israeli airstrikes](#) have killed more than [3,500 civilians](#), injured more than 12,000, and displaced over [one million](#) people. For the past 16 years, Israel has imposed a blockade on Gaza, depriving people of their fundamental rights. Over the past 12 days, this blockade has been weaponized to deny Palestinians access to food, water, medical aid, electricity, and the [internet](#). Denying people humanitarian aid during a siege is a [war crime](#).

Since the 1993 Oslo Accords, Israel has maintained control of the occupied Palestinian territory's telecommunications infrastructure, denying Palestinians their right to access safe, affordable, and quality internet, including limiting access to [2G mobile data technologies in Gaza and 3G in the West Bank](#). During its military offensives on Gaza in 2008, 2011, 2014, and 2021, the Israeli occupation repeatedly [bombed](#) vital internet infrastructure, causing complete internet blackouts.

During the recent escalation, Israel has targeted civil telecommunications infrastructure to limit Palestinians and international media from broadcasting its atrocities and crimes against humanity happening on the ground. Internet outages and disruptions have been documented in Gaza since the start of Israeli bombing, as reported by the [Internet Outage Detection and Analysis](#) and by the [#KeepitOn coalition](#). Israel has dropped more than [6,000 bombs](#) on Gaza, targeting power and internet infrastructure, using [white phosphorus](#) against civilians, and blocking the entry of vital aid such as food and medical supplies. Without electricity, the internet, or basic Information and communication technology (ICT) services, people in Gaza cannot access life-saving information about which areas are under attack or where they can find medical supplies and aid, nor can they connect with families and loved ones. They are cut off from the world.

In a war context, access to the internet is a fundamental enabler not only of personal and communal safety, but also of ensuring that human rights violations and war crimes are recorded and reported. Freedom of expression related to Palestine is currently in crisis, from tech platforms' policies and practices censoring related content, to targeted attacks on and killings of journalists. The internet must be kept on to prevent this crisis of expression being exacerbated further. In Gaza, access to the internet, communications, and information can be the difference between life and death, just as much as vital necessities of food, fuel and water. Reporters, journalists, human rights defenders, and news agencies have been relentlessly targeted, leaving civilians to document the war via social media.

The MENA Alliance for Digital Rights and undersigned organizations strongly condemn the destruction of telecommunications infrastructure in Gaza, which prevents Palestinians from accessing life-saving information. We demand an immediate ceasefire and the immediate restoration of internet connectivity in Gaza, and we call for an end to the targeting of civilian telecommunications infrastructure.

We call on the international community to take all necessary steps to support the immediate restoration of telecommunications and other essential services in Gaza and any other affected areas, and to ensure that international and humanitarian law are respected.

Signatures

SMEX
7amleh
Access Now
INSM Foundation for Digital Rights
WITNESS
Derechos Digitales
Sawn for Digital Rights
Kandoo
Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)
Jordan Open Source Association (JOSA)
Meedan
The Tor Project
Open Observatory of Network Interference (OONI)
MENA Rights Group (MRG)
ARTICLE19
IFEX
Association for Progressive Communications
JCA-NET(Japan)
Digital Rights Foundation (DRF)
Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN)
Internet Sans Frontières
Lebanese Center for Human Rights
Next Billion Network
PAX Memoria
Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet)
Intervozes - Coletivo Brasil de Comunicação Social
Paradigm Initiative (PIN) Kashmir
Digital Rights Kashmir
Instituto Nupef
GreenNet
Azerbaijan Internet Watch (AIW)

Hiperderecho
Numun Fund
Bolo Bhi
Miaan Group
Office of civil freedoms
Coding Rights
Kijiji Yeetu
Human Rights Journalists Network Nigeria
Ubunteam
WAICT NETWORKS CABO VERDE
Digital Rights Lawyers Initiative (DRLI)
DIGICIVIC INITIATIVE (DI)
Fantsuam Foundation, Nigeria
Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio & Communication
Consortium of Ethiopian Human Rights Organizations (CEHRO)
Liberty and Peace NOW! Human Rights Reporters
Africa Open Data and Internet Research Foundation
Advocacy Initiative for Development (AID)
Myanmar Internet Project
The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Gambia (TANGO)
Securing Organizations with Automated Policymaking (SOAP)
Kigali Human Rights Attorneys and Legal consultants
YODET
The Engine Room
Center for Advancement of Rights and Democracy (CARD)
OXCON Consulting (United Kingdom)
Fundación Acceso, Costa Rica.
International Press Centre (IPC)
Global Digital Inclusion Partnership (GDIP)
World Pulse
Manushya Foundation (Thailand, Laos)
ASEAN Regional Coalition to #StopDigitalDictatorship
Instituto Minas Programam (Brazil)
TEDIC
Majal.org (Bahrain)
TEDIC
Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFEnet)
ALTSEAN-Burma
Aurat March Lahore
Media Diversity Institute - Armenia
RRR Collective
Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (CEMESP-Liberia)
Youth and Society (YAS)
Freedom Forum, Nepal

AfricTivistes

LaLibre.net Tecnologías Comunitarias - Ecuador

SocialTIC

Humanis Foundation Southeast Asia (affiliated with Hivos)

Computer Professionals' Union (Philippines)

PERIN+1S

YLBHI (Indonesia Legal Aid Foundation)

Fight for the Future

The Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS)

Kurdistan without Genocide

Organization of the Justice Campaign

Kurdish organizations Network coalition for the International Criminal court (KONCICC)

May First Movement Technology

Foundation for Media Alternatives

PurpleCode Collective

CODAYati

Digital Rights Watch

Body & Data, Nepal

Human Rights Working Group (HRWG), Indonesia

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

Internet Freedom Foundation

Whose knowledge?

Zaina foundation