

**To: Member governments of the Middle East Quartet**

**Re: Call for action to address the alarming situation in Area C and Gaza**

As aid agencies working in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel, We remain deeply concerned by ongoing demolitions and displacement in Area C and the continued blockade of Gaza. At your forthcoming meeting of the Quartet, we urge you to agree the transfer of permit and planning authorities in Area C of the West Bank to Palestinians and ensure the full implementation of the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access in the Gaza Strip.

Despite 39 statements by the Quartet deploring settlement expansion and other measures that 'prejudge the outcome of negotiations,' Israeli settlement construction, demolitions and forced displacement continue at an alarming rate. The past six months have seen a rise in the number of Palestinians being displaced, facilitated by the discriminatory permit and planning system imposed by Israeli authorities on Palestinians in Area C.

Seventy per cent of Gazans are currently dependent on aid. In June and December 2010, the Government of Israel made commitments to 'ease' the movement and access of goods. However, on average only 20 trucks of exports have left Gaza per month in 2012, while imports remain at 40% of pre-blockade levels. We therefore urge the Quartet to uphold UN Security Council Resolution 1860 and ensure the government of Israel immediately begins the sustained re-opening of all crossings, on the basis of the Agreement on Movement and Access .

While we continue to share the Quartet's concerns for Israel's legitimate security requirements, the ongoing blockade of the Gaza Strip as well settlement expansion and demolition of homes, schools, and water tanks in Area C are illegal under international law and cannot provide long-term security or prosperity for either Israelis or Palestinians. We would therefore welcome a visit by Quartet representatives to Gaza and Area C to monitor and report on the progress made by the Government of Israel towards the full implementation of the pre-existing commitments and legal obligations under International Law. This should form the basis for agreeing concrete action plans to end the land, sea and air blockade of the Gaza strip and ensure the implementation of the non-discriminatory permit and planning regime in Area C.