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Press Release: For Immediate Release

#Notatarget: Humanitarian Organisations Call for Upholding of International Humanitarian Law in Gaza Crisis

As the world marks six months since the onset of the latest conflict in Gaza, humanitarian organisations are issuing a desperate plea to the Government to push for all parties to uphold international humanitarian law. Recent events, including the tragic destruction of Al Shifa Hospital and the targeted attacks on World Central Kitchen vehicles resulting in the loss of seven aid workers from multiple countries, have intensified concerns within the humanitarian sector. At least [196 aid workers have been killed](#) in this conflict to date.

The decimation of Al Shifa Hospital, the largest medical facility in Gaza, is a devastating blow to the already strained healthcare infrastructure in the region. Additionally, the loss of aid workers, alongside civilian casualties, underscores the urgent need for action to protect innocent civilians.

"Approximately 1.5 million civilians are currently sheltering in Rafah," stated Mena Antonio, Chief Executive of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand. "The crowded conditions mean hundreds of thousands of civilians are directly in the line of fire, risking death, serious injury, and lasting trauma. This is abhorrent and unacceptable."

The escalating conflict not only poses immediate threats to civilian lives but also jeopardises the delivery of essential humanitarian aid. Tearfund CEO Ian McInnes emphasised, "An offensive could sever the lifeline of humanitarian supplies to Gaza's civilian population. There are no alternative routes for immediate aid delivery. The only aid available will likely be cut off as soon as any military offensive begins. This must not happen."

Moreover, the looming indications of famine in northern Gaza further exacerbate the humanitarian crisis. The preventable suffering of innocent civilians and the obstruction of aid access is a "moral outrage" according to United Nations Secretary General Antonio Gutierrez and underscores the urgent need for intervention to avert further catastrophe.

The United Nations International Court of Justice has reinforced Israel's obligation to prevent harm to Palestinian civilians and maintain aid routes into Gaza.

With over [32,000 Palestinians killed](#) and more than [100,000 wounded](#) since the crisis began, and an estimated [1.1 million individuals on the brink of famine](#), urgent action is imperative. A permanent ceasefire is the only way to prevent further atrocities and begin recovery from the devastating impacts of this conflict.

We support Prime Minister Christopher Luxon's previous call for a ceasefire, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Winston Peters' [announcement](#) of a further \$2 million to the United Nations 2720 mechanism for Gaza is commendable. Continued and intensified support from the government is necessary to address the crisis, including diplomatic efforts to uphold international humanitarian law and ensure unfettered aid delivery. We urge the Government to leverage all available resources to push for an immediate cessation of hostilities, unhindered aid delivery, and the end of arms sales to all sides involved in the conflict.

The humanitarian organisations in support of this letter:

| Name | Position | Organisation |
|-------------------|--------------------|---|
| Peter Rudd | Executive Director | Council for International Development Aotearoa NZ |
| Mena Antonio | CE | Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand |
| Ian McInnes | CEO | Tearfund New Zealand |
| Michael Hartfield | National Director | Anglican Missions |
| Josie Pagani | CEO | ChildFund New Zealand |
| Heidi Coetzee | CEO | Save the Children NZ |
| Jason Myers | Executive Director | Oxfam Aotearoa |
| Michelle Sharp | CEO | UNICEF Aotearoa |
| Murray Sheard | CEO | CBM New Zealand |