

## International Day of Persons with Disabilities

**The undersigned international agencies working in disability in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) are concerned about the impact of the period of heightened conflict in the Gaza Strip during November and the effect it has had on people with disabilities and vulnerable groups - including older people, children and pregnant women.**

Between November 14 and 21, the people of Gaza lived under the threat of death and injury due to the escalation of cross-border violence. Of the 1.6 million people living in the Gaza Strip, the World Health Organisation estimates that around 15% are people with disabilities. By the time that the ceasefire came into effect, 158 people had been killed and 1,269 were injured. At the same time, the people of Gaza also witnessed the destruction of many buildings and homes, including the facilities of the Palestinian Paralympic Committee.

People with disabilities not only share the needs of the general population but also have specific and diverse needs that must be addressed during and in the immediate aftermath of violent conflicts. Medical supplies and support services were severely disrupted by the violence in Gaza and will need to be given attention during the recovery period.

We are particularly concerned regarding health support for people with new injuries, delivery of psychosocial support, provisions for daily medication and assistive support, and the capacity of rehabilitation services to recover from the recent crisis. **We also believe it is essential to ensure that people with disabilities are fully informed of and participate in early recovery assessments and in the planning and implementation of interventions.**

### Call for Action

The following agencies call upon international and national relief and development workers, the donor community and decision makers to ensure the equal rights, dignity and non discrimination of people with disabilities and their families. In recognition of these principles:

1. We call upon state actors to adhere to Article 11 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which declares that “States Parties shall take (...) all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters.”
2. We call upon all actors to ensure that people with disabilities have immediate access to all humanitarian interventions in the Gaza Strip, in particular those within: (1) Protection, (2) Health and Nutrition, (3) Reconstruction and Shelter, (4) Water and Sanitation; and (5) Psychosocial support.



*Co-winner of Nobel Peace Prize*



*Movimiento por la Paz*

