

17 June 2024

IBBY Statement on the ongoing violations of children's rights in Gaza

The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) stands by the principles endorsed in the United Nations Human Rights Conventions, especially the Convention on the Rights of the Child and urges all global leaders to work together on behalf of the children of Gaza.

IBBY was born in the aftermath of World War II with the unflinching belief that international understanding is a necessary condition for tolerance and world peace. By promoting quality children's books and reading, it has contributed to making the ideals of solidarity, respect, and cooperation known to children and young people all around the world.

IBBY has helped build and grow libraries and reading programmes for children worldwide, including in Beit Hanoun and Rafah in Palestine. Established in 2008, these were safe places filled with more than five thousand books where children could read, share thoughts, write poems, meet authors, and even win awards – such as the UNESCO "World Tales" competition won by a young member of the al-Shawka library in Rafah in 2021. Those libraries have now been destroyed, but the loss of these cultural and childhood touchstones is only a small part of the tragedy in Palestine. As we watch the continuing violence and destruction in Gaza, we mourn for the children and families who are killed, injured, displaced, and orphaned. We deplore the chaos and confusion that dominates their daily lives, and the lack of basic human necessities of food, water, shelter, and medical aid.

Every child in the world deserves to be protected and nurtured. We condemn the ongoing violations of children's basic rights in Gaza. IBBY adds its voice to the urgent calls for access to humanitarian aid and life-saving supplies for the people of Gaza. Further, we strongly urge the leaders of Israel and Hamas to comply with the international rulings and resolutions to enact an immediate ceasefire.

The International Board on Books for Young People
Executive Committee