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**PRESS RELEASE**  
For Immediate Release



**NEARLY HALF A MILLION PEOPLE FLEE RAFAH AS HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF WITH INCREASED FEROCITY ON 76<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF NAKBA**

As we reflect 76 years on from the Nakba it is with sadness that we see Palestinians are still being killed every day, persecuted and are in desperate need of humanitarian support, perhaps more than ever before.

Nearly 500,000 people have fled Rafah as the Israeli army expands its ground invasion of the area and as history repeats itself - on the 76<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Nakba.

In Rafah, around 450,000 people have been displaced within the last two weeks alone amid wider violence which has seen an estimated 1.9 million Palestinians displaced in Gaza since 7 October last year.

Islamic Relief condemns the Israeli government and the international community for allowing history to repeat itself - and for allowing the horror of the last seven months to persist without end. We call for a ceasefire, protection of civilians and aid access.

An Islamic Relief staff member in Gaza said, "The feeling of betrayal and being let down is taking over everyone in Gaza. We are exhausted and praying that the world will end this nightmare, but still there is no end in sight. Our destruction will go on for another round. We have to keep suffering and living this pain."

Witnesses have said parts of Rafah which was previously occupied by at least 1.2 million people are now like a ghost town and Israeli tanks have moved further into Rafah yesterday reportedly rolling into residential neighbourhoods and crossing the strategically important Salah al-Din Road.

The Islamic Relief staff member said, "I started getting calls from my friends in Rafah – they are preparing for a new journey, yet another displacement. One friend struggled

to hold back tears as he described the scenes around him: people running everywhere; families walking with as many of their belongings as they can carry...But these families have nowhere else to go. They stayed in Rafah... hoping the global opposition to an attack... would stop the occupying army. But in truth, the whole world has left us to be brutalized by Israel.”

“I saw footage of Israeli tanks occupying the Rafah Crossing and destroying signs that said ‘I ❤️ Gaza.’ Last year, when my family returned from our trip to Türkiye, me and my children took a selfie next to one of those signs.”

People are terrified and feel hemmed in by a military force which has killed thousands of civilians including women and children in often brutal ways since the Israeli siege of Gaza began. The incursion into Rafah has seen its border crossing closed with little aid getting into Gaza for days despite an increasingly desperate and hungry population which is moving into famine.

Our staff continue to provide food to people in Gaza including meals now being distributed in the north of the enclave, as well as in Khan Younis. We’ve also delivered thousands of litres of clean water and provided pregnant women and children with nutrition supplements to help ward off malnutrition. But the border crossings must reopen for new supplies to be delivered, the invasion of Rafah must end, and a desperately needed ceasefire called now.

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### **About Islamic Relief**

Islamic Relief is an independent international humanitarian aid and development organization. Islamic Relief is headquartered in the United Kingdom and was founded in 1984. Islamic Relief serves in more than 45 countries, assisting more than 120 million people. The scope of Islamic Relief assistance covers emergency assistance, integrated sustainable development, disaster risk reduction, and advocacy.

Islamic Relief has been operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory since 1997 and already helped hundreds of thousands of people in Palestine by providing food aid, clean water access, shelter, orphan sponsorship, community development programs, sustainable livelihood, education, medical, psychosocial and others.

## **About Islamic Relief Malaysia**

Islamic Relief Malaysia was established in 2005, which aspires to continue Islamic Relief humanitarian assistance in the Asia-Pacific region. Islamic Relief Malaysia serves as a fundraising and project implementer for international and local projects.

Kindly visit the Islamic Relief Malaysia website, [www.islamic-relief.org.my](http://www.islamic-relief.org.my) for more information.

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