

Position Statement

by the Southern Africa People
Solidarity Network (SAPSN) on
War in the Middle East



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

13 March 2026

The Southern Africa People Solidarity Network (SAPSN), a regional network of social movements and civil society organisations from fifteen countries across Southern Africa, strongly condemns the escalating military aggression by the United States and Israel against the sovereign state of Iran, as well as the continued bombing of civilian areas in Lebanon and the ongoing devastation of Palestine.

SAPSN is an anti-war movement that stands for democracy, peace, human rights, and the sovereignty of all peoples. Our movement rejects imperial domination, invasions, and wars of aggression wherever they occur. The people of the world deserve peace, dignity, and development not endless wars driven by geopolitical power struggles.

The military attacks against Iran violate fundamental principles of international law. Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any sovereign state. Unilateral military attacks that are not authorised by the UN Security Council or conducted in legitimate self-defence are illegal under international law.

Furthermore, the bombing of civilian areas in Lebanon and the continued attacks on civilians in Palestine violate international humanitarian law under the Geneva Conventions, which require the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure during armed conflict. The destruction of homes, hospitals, and basic infrastructure and the forced displacement of civilians in Lebanon constitute grave breaches of these obligations and deepen the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding across the region.

SAPSN is deeply concerned about the continued militarisation of the Middle East and the role of the United States in escalating tensions in the region. For decades, the United States has maintained a vast military presence across the Middle East. Today it stations between 40,000 and 50,000 troops across at least 19 military sites in the region, including eight permanent bases located in Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. This extensive military infrastructure effectively surrounds Iran and reflects a long-standing strategy of military dominance and geopolitical control over the region. Such militarisation fuels conflict rather than peace. It strengthens what many have described as the military-industrial complex, a system in which war, arms production, and geopolitical confrontation generate enormous profits for defence industries while ordinary people pay the price through death, displacement, and economic hardship.

SAPSN therefore condemns the continued pursuit of war and confrontation driven by imperial interests rather than genuine commitments to peace and stability. The bombing of Lebanon has already displaced large numbers of civilians and further destabilised an already fragile region. The expansion of conflict beyond Gaza and into neighbouring countries risks triggering a broader regional war with devastating consequences.

At a time when the world is still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and confronting climate disasters and economic crises, war in the Middle East threatens global peace and economic stability.

Many countries in Africa depend on energy imports from the region. Escalating war risks disrupting global energy markets and worsening poverty and inequality across the Global South.

SAPSN stands firmly in solidarity with the people of Palestine in their long struggle for justice, dignity, and self-determination. We also express solidarity with the people of Lebanon, United Arab Emirates, Iran, Iraq, Israel and the wider Middle East whose lives are being destroyed by cycles of violence and war.

We recognise and re-assert that in every conflict, the greatest victims are not soldiers carrying guns but innocent civilians - women, children, workers and communities whose lives are disrupted or destroyed.

SAPSN calls for:

- An immediate cessation of hostilities across the Middle East
- An end to the bombing of civilian areas in Lebanon and Palestine
- Respect for the sovereignty of Iran and all nations
- Full compliance with international humanitarian law
- A return to diplomacy and peaceful dialogue

SAPSN further calls on the African Union, the Southern African Development Community and the United Nations to act urgently to prevent further escalation and promote a just and lasting peace. The people of Africa are already feeling the impact of the needless wars as prices of basic goods are rising beyond average incomes. Economies are at stake, livelihoods are at stake. While there are no missiles flying in our airspaces, the economic missiles from the war zone are hitting the poorest of the poor very hard.

Humanity cannot claim to fight poverty while simultaneously investing billions into weapons and destruction. War destroys lives, economies and the future of generations.

As the saying reminds us: *“An eye for an eye will make the whole world blind.”* SAPSN therefore calls on all parties to respect the sanctity of life, uphold international law and commit to peaceful solutions.

War must stop. Dialogue must begin. Peace must prevail.

Issued by:

The Southern Africa People Solidarity Network (SAPSN)