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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IFATCA Calls for Immediate Cessation of Attacks on Civilian Aviation Infrastructure

The International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA) expresses its deep concern and unwavering solidarity with Israeli air traffic controllers following the recent missile strike targeting Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport. IFATCA urges the involved parties to refrain from endangering the safety of civilians, civilian infrastructure and personnel.

This tragic event highlights an urgent and pressing issue: the protection of the personnel and infrastructure essential for safe aviation. Air traffic controllers operate as neutral actors, delivering critical safety-of-life services under international law. Targeting them or the infrastructure they depend on not only endangers lives but also violates established global norms.

International protocols, including ICAO's Annex 17, UN Security Council Resolution 2286, and Article 52 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, outline the protection of civilian personnel and infrastructure critical to public safety. These frameworks explicitly mandate the protection of civilian personnel and critical infrastructure in conflict zones by collectively emphasizing the responsibility of all parties in a conflict to respect civilian infrastructure and personnel essential for public safety, such as air traffic controllers.

In spite of the attack, service at Ben Gurion airport was only briefly interrupted to ensure that the aerodrome was safe to continue operations. This highlights the dedication and professionalism of the air traffic control personnel on duty as they deliver service every day in a perilous environment.

IFATCA stands in solidarity with its Member Association, the Air Traffic Controllers' Association of Israel (ATCAI), and urges all parties involved in the conflict to adhere to international legal obligations and protect civilian infrastructure and personnel. Additionally, the International Community, the United Nations, ICAO, and other global entities must take decisive and immediate action to prevent further violations and ensure the safety and well-being of air traffic controllers.

Our thoughts are with the controllers on duty at the time of this jarring attack, as well as all those affected by this tragic incident. IFATCA reaffirms its dedication to advocating for the safety, security, and well-being of air traffic controllers globally. We remain steadfast in our commitment to upholding the principles of safety and neutrality that underpin the critical work of air traffic controllers everywhere.

This incident serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need for concerted action to protect those who ensure the safety of aviation, even in the most challenging circumstances.



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