

**Economic and Social Council**Distr.
GENERALE/CN.4/2003/G/14
4 November 2002

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-ninth session
Item 8 of the provisional agenda**QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE
OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE****Letter dated 4 November 2002 from the Permanent Observer for Palestine
to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the United Nations
High Commissioner for Human Rights**

The Israeli occupation forces continue to escalate their crimes of excessive use of force, extrajudicial assassinations, detentions, house demolitions and land confiscation by razing agricultural farms and uprooting fruit trees in the occupied Palestinian territory, thus causing more martyrs, wounded and homeless among the innocent Palestinian civilians. So far, at least 2,000 Palestinians have been killed since September 2000 at the hands of the Israeli occupation forces. Many Palestinian controlled areas are still subjected to the curfew regime. Tulkarem has been under constant curfew for the last 13 days and Jenin for the last 8 days. In total, the West Bank has been under this curfew regime for over 130 days now.

In Jenin, a 15-year-old boy was shot dead last week when he went for a walk during the curfew. In the same city, a 21-year-old man was also killed during the curfew by an Israeli sniper who shot him in the head.

On Monday, 28 October, Israeli forces shot and killed Ahmad Anbad (aged 17) in Tulkarem. He was shot by the Israeli forces at a distance of no more than 150 metres, for no apparent reason.

These crimes of wilful killings constitute a flagrant violation of the provisions of international law and international humanitarian law, particularly those relating to the right to life, and a grave breach of articles 3 and 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949.

Israel, the occupying Power, also continues to pursue its policy of house demolitions as a punitive measure against innocent Palestinian civilians.

On Thursday, 31 October, Israeli forces surrounded the houses of four families from the Jenin refugee camp. Israeli troops forced those families to leave their houses without giving them time to collect their personal belongings. They planted explosives in four homes where six families lived. In total, 37 people, including 14 children, became homeless as a result of this punitive measure. The houses were totally destroyed, without any of the belongings inside being rescued. Severe damage was also caused to the houses nearby.

Since September 2000, at least 1,046 houses have been demolished, leaving 7,844 people homeless.

Not only are the acts of house demolitions and destruction of property committed by Israel as a collective punishment illegal, but they also constitute a flagrant violation of articles 53 and 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Such acts further constitute extrajudicial punishment and arbitrary interference in home and property.

Furthermore, Israeli forces assassinated four Palestinians only last week.

On 30 October, Ayed Baker Mansour, aged 35, from Kufar Qalil near Nablus, was assassinated by Israeli forces. The incident occurred as Mansour was making his way from his car to his house. Mansour left three children behind.

On 29 October, Israeli forces assassinated Issam Sawafteh, aged 19, from Tubas near Jenin. A large number of soldiers surrounded the house where Issam was staying, took his brother and father from their house by force and used them as a human shield. Then the Israeli occupation forces without giving any warning opened heavy fire at the two-storey house, destroying parts of it, and then began to shoot at Issam from a distance of no more than one metre.

On 27 October, two Palestinians, Ahmad Jawdatallah, aged 23, and Alaa Khadayriyyeh, aged 24, from Nablus were both killed in an extrajudicial execution.

In Ras al-Ein, Nablus, four armed men from Israel's Special Forces, which can more appropriately be described as "death squads", aimed their guns at two men and opened heavy fire, from a distance of no more than 20 metres. Both died instantly with more than 20 bullets found in their bodies. After executing the two men, the Special Forces escaped by shooting indiscriminately at civilians in their cars. One child, Yazan Fatayir, aged 7, was critically injured with a bullet in his head.

There have been at least 176 assassinations by Israeli forces since September 2000, including 63 of Palestinian bystanders. All these killings constitute a grave violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and as such are considered war crimes. Such acts constitute a flagrant violation of that

Convention, which seeks to protect the lives of the civilian population, and of human rights norms that affirm the right to life and prohibit the execution of civilians.


To further illustrate the daily human rights violations committed by the Israeli occupation forces against civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory, memorandums issued by the Palestinian National Authority covering the period from Monday 28 October to Sunday 3 November 2002 are enclosed herewith.

We appeal to Your Excellency to condemn Israel's systematic policy of assassinations and demolitions, to hold the Government of Israel responsible for these human rights violations, to urge it to abide by international norms, to live up to its obligations under international humanitarian law and to refrain from committing crimes against innocent civilians. We also appeal to Your Excellency to call for the immediate deployment of an international protection presence to prevent human rights violations and protect the Palestinian population until Israel withdraws from all the occupied Palestinian territories.

I would be most grateful if you could arrange to have this letter and the annex thereto^{*} circulated to the distinguished members of the Commission on Human Rights, as an official document of its fifty-ninth session under agenda item 8.

(Signed) Nabil RAMLAWI
Ambassador
Permanent Observer

* Reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.


e_cn4_2003_G_14.pdf
(with attachments)