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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 20 January 2003 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 last week committed further crimes within the framework of their brutal occupation of the Palestinian territories and their bloody war against Palestinian civilians and their property. They continue to carry out large-scale incursions into Palestinian areas, which are under heavy shelling from their war planes and military war machine, followed by large campaigns of arrest and detentions; they also persist in their policy of extrajudicial executions, house demolitions, uprooting of fruit trees and levelling of agricultural land.

In flagrant violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and of the principles of international law, particularly the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Israeli occupation forces continue to deliberately target Palestinian children. At least 540 children under the age of 20 have been killed by Israel occupation forces and armed settlers since September 2000.

On 13 January, two Palestinian children were killed while a third was critically injured in an Israeli air strike when Israeli Apache helicopters shot three rockets at a vehicle in the southern Gaza Strip city of Khan Younis. Mohammed Kaware' (23) and Abdelrahman al-Najjar (16) were killed on the spot while Abed Shbair was critically injured.

Israeli occupation forces assassinated a Palestinian resident of the West Bank city of Nablus, identified as Rami Abu Baker (27), who was hit with a tank shell that caused his death. Another Palestinian civilian was injured by the shell.

Israeli tanks, stationed at the border between Israel and the Palestinian territories, opened fire and killed two teenagers in the east of Gaza City. Karam al-Moghanni (17) and Khaled Abu Alqomboz (18) were killed and their bodies were kept by Israeli forces.

The teenager Iyad abu Shaar died of wounds he sustained after Israeli occupation forces shot him with heavy ammunition during an earlier invasion of a Gaza Strip refugee camp.

On the other hand, the Israeli occupation troops stationed at military roadblocks continue to deny freedom of movement to Palestinian civilians, torturing, humiliating and exposing to danger all those who try to cross these roadblocks. As a result of this ill-treatment, a Palestinian woman, Rasmya Bsharat, suffered a miscarriage after Israeli soldiers shot gas canisters in occupied East Jerusalem.

On 15 January, Israeli occupation forces killed two students in Tulkarem. They shot dead Mohammed Mobarak (17) while he was going to his school in Tulkarem's refugee camp, while Hazza' Shadee (17) was shot dead in the village of E'llar, near Tulkarem.

In an unjustified act of murder, the Israeli occupation forces shot dead a mentally ill man named Ribhi Zakameh in the West Bank town of Qabatyia.

On 18 January, an Israeli sniper shot dead a Palestinian man, Abdul Fatah Hassan Orabi (35), while he was fixing the roof of his house in the Rafah refugee camp in the Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, and in violation of the provisions of international law and international humanitarian law which forbid imposing collective punishments, the Israeli occupation forces persist in reinforcing their punitive measures against the families of wanted Palestinians, dynamiting more homes, imposing comprehensive siege, curfew and closure on Palestinian towns, villages and camps, isolating them from each other and separating them into closed cantons, obstructing the freedom of movement of Palestinians inside and outside the occupied Palestinian territories.

I regret to inform you that as a result of the increasing number of Palestinians who continue to be killed and injured at the hands of the Israeli occupation forces with every passing day, the toll of Palestinian martyrs since September 2000 has increased to at least 2,047 and at least 21,473 others wounded, most of them

sustaining severe injuries and permanent disabilities.

In light of the continued campaign of war, bloodshed and destruction being waged by the Israeli occupation authorities, forces and settlers, in all Palestinian towns, villages and camps, we once again reiterate our call to Your Excellency to intervene with the Government of Israel and urge it to refrain from all of the above-mentioned serious violations and grave breaches of international law and international humanitarian law and from all the atrocities and heinous crimes being committed against the Palestinian people, and to put an end to its policy of wilful killing, deliberately targeting Palestinian children.

We also appeal to Your Excellency to use all your offices to provide international protection to protect the Palestinian protected persons until Israel has withdrawn its forces from all the Palestinian territories occupied since June 1967, including East Jerusalem.

I would be most grateful if you could arrange to have this letter distributed to the members of the Commission on Human Rights, as an official document of the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights under its agenda item 8.

(Signed) Nabil RAMLAWI
Ambassador
Permanent Observer
