



Press Conference

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

PRESS CONFERENCE BY UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Briefing correspondents at Headquarters today, Louise Arbour, High Commissioner for Human Rights, signalled “significant advances” in the normative human rights framework, but highlighted troubling thematic issues like the ongoing violence against women and the prevailing culture of impunity.

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With respect to the extrajudicial killings by Israel in Gaza and the West Bank, and the thousands of Palestinians detained without trial, she said she had shared that concern directly with Israeli authorities in her recent visit to the Middle East. At that point, the Israeli Supreme Court had not yet rendered its decision on the legality of extrajudicial killings. The court was an excellent judicial body, but its decision had not gone the distance in totally prohibiting that practice. The ruling had been disappointing.

At the same time, one could not underplay the very profound security claims of ordinary Israelis, she added. People had the right to turn to their Government for protection. The measures employed to provide security, however, should not have the kind of impact they were having on ordinary Palestinians, by curtailing their ability to make a living and curbing their access to health care.

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