

**Economic and Social Council**Distr.
GENERALE/CN.4/2003/G/16
18 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 18 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 aggression against the Palestinian people and its land, totally reoccupying most Palestinian towns, villages and camps, particularly in Hebron, Nablus, Jenin and Tulkarem, where the Palestinian population is daily exposed to the most hideous crimes of killing and destruction. Since last Tuesday, hundreds of tanks and other heavy war machines have invaded Palestinian controlled areas, randomly shelling residential areas with artillery, helicopters and tanks. At least six homes have been demolished during the last couple of days in Hebron by the Israeli occupation forces, reaffirming once again Israel's plan to Judaize the old city and to reinforce its policy of creating facts on the ground. Since July this year, at least 61 Palestinian houses have been demolished, leaving more than 500 people homeless, including more than 220 children.

The Israeli occupation forces continue to conduct large campaigns of arrest, detaining daily scores of Palestinians, to invade civilians' homes, destroying their belongings and stealing their valuable items, to raze agricultural lands, to uproot trees, and to destroy water networks and crops, which constitute the basic and only means of subsistence for hundreds of Palestinian families currently on the verge of starvation. The Israeli occupation forces also continue to impose a strict curfew on most Palestinian towns, villages and camps, denying residents access to all facilities, including workplaces, schools and hospitals.

By the end of last week, Salma Mahmoud Sharhab, aged 21, from Nablus, was killed when Israeli forces shelled and fired randomly at civilian homes east of Nablus City. Also in Nablus, 16-year-old Omran Ashileh was shot in the chest by Israeli soldiers and killed instantly.

Nablus City, including its refugee camps, remain under total curfew that denies residents free access. Ambulances are not permitted to move between the eastern and western parts of Nablus. The City of Nablus has been under renewed and reinforced siege since Tuesday, 12 November when around 150 tanks entered the city. There are Israeli snipers stationed all over the city, and at least eight private homes have been taken over by the army effectively holding the families hostage in their own homes. Nablus has been under constant siege and curfew since June this year.

In Jenin, Ibrahim Bassam Asadeh, aged 16, was killed by live ammunition shots to his chest and abdomen as he was leaving Jenin refugee camp.

Mahmoud Sulaiman Obeid, aged 32, was assassinated in his home. Israeli forces entered his house and executed him in front of his parents.

In Hebron, Israeli forces killed three Palestinians. After the incident, Israeli forces entered the entire city of Hebron and started to randomly shell and fire at homes. Hebron is under complete curfew, with Israeli forces reoccupying the entire city.

On Monday, 11 November, a 3-year-old Palestinian child was killed by Israeli troops in Rafah, the second child to be killed by the Israeli occupation forces in less than two days. Hamed Asa'ad Al-Masri was killed by a live bullet fired at his chest when his family was escaping heavy Israeli shelling at their neighbourhood in the Rafah refugee camp. His mother was seriously injured. Hamed was at least the 377th Palestinian child to be killed by the Israeli army since September 2000.

Jallal Mohammed Taher Awijan, aged 18, was shot and killed with live ammunition in the chest by Israeli troops in the Old City of Nablus.

All these crimes and acts committed by the Israeli occupation forces against innocent civilians constitute flagrant violations of Palestinian civilians' economic, social and cultural rights. They also constitute grave violations of international law and international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949.

To further illustrate the daily human rights abuses and violations committed by the Israeli occupation forces against Palestinian civilians, memorandums issued by the Palestinian National Authority covering the period from Sunday 10 to Sunday 17 November 2002 are enclosed herewith.

In view of the escalation of the already dramatic situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, we once again appeal to Your Excellency and, through you, to the international community to directly intervene with the Government of Israel, urging it to refrain from the savage aggression being launched by its occupation forces against our people and national institutions in most Palestinian towns, villages and camps, to stop its campaign of terror and State sponsored terrorism against our innocent civilian population, to stop killing our children, to abide by international norms and to live up to

its obligations under international humanitarian law.

We also appeal to Your Excellency to use your good offices in order to have an international protection force or presence in Palestine to monitor the daily aggressions, massacres and crimes committed by Israel against our Palestinian people, to prevent the human rights violations and protect the Palestinian civilian population until Israel, the occupying Power, 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.

