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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 6 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 persist in their occupation of our camps, villages and towns, escalating their systematic human rights violations and criminal aggression against our Palestinian people and opening fire on every moving person or vehicle, while the Israeli army continues to impose a total siege and closure on all Palestinian towns, villages and camps, thus causing more deaths, wounds, destruction, panic and despair among the Palestinian people.

On Monday, 30 December, the Israeli occupation forces made an incursion into Nablus, shot dead Jamal Zbarou, in his twenties, seized a number of houses, detained a number of their inhabitants and fired indiscriminately all over the town, wounding at least 16 people.

In another incident which took place to the north of the West Bank city of Jenin, Israeli occupation forces intentionally shot Assem Msad, aged 37, a Palestinian teacher, killing him on the spot. He was shot with two bullets in the head and the chest.

In Hebron, Emran Abu Hamdyah, a 16-year-old boy was found dead as a result of severe beating at the hands of the Israeli occupation forces with metal or other tools on the head and other parts of his body.

On Tuesday, 31 December 2002, Hassan Abu Said, aged 38, was killed after being shot in the chest by the Israeli occupation forces in Khan Younis city, south of the Gaza Strip.

On Wednesday, 1 January, the Israeli occupation forces committed yet another hideous crime to be added to their already endless list of crimes of wilful killing and State-sponsored terrorism when they opened fire on a group of children who were playing to the south of the illegal Israeli settlement "Eli Sinai" in Gaza, killing three children: Mohamed Attai Dwas, 14, Tareq Ziad Dwas, 15 and Jihad Jomaa Abed, 13, and wounding several others. Their bodies have been severely mutilated, all of their limbs were utterly damaged and their chests holed with several live bullets.

It has become apparent that the wilful killings of Palestinian civilians, including children, have become a pattern of behaviour by Israeli occupying forces. The number of Palestinian children killed at the hands of the Israeli occupying forces is not only alarming, but continues to increase at an unprecedented rate. The occupying Power must be held accountable for this war crime and for all other war crimes and atrocities committed against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Late at night an infant Abderrahman Samer Abu baker, aged 10 days, died in Nablus as Israeli soldiers prevented the ambulance carrying the sick child from trying to reach Raphidia Hospital.

In the early morning of Thursday, 2 January, more than 20 Israeli tanks, supported by armoured vehicles, helicopter gunships and bulldozers, raided the Rafah refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, demolishing 28 homes belonging to Palestinian families. Israeli occupying forces also raided the refugee camps of Briej and El-Mughazi in the Gaza Strip. This Israeli raid on such densely populated refugee camps caused extensive damage and destruction to Palestinian infrastructure and property. This illegal measure taken by the occupying Power represents an act of collective punishment, in flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law.

Meanwhile bulldozing Palestinian factories, workshops and stores, confiscating Palestinian lands, dynamiting homes with explosives, destroying water networks, uprooting fruit trees, causing wide destruction to crops and to agricultural equipment, destroying electricity pylons, telephone networks, detaining scores of Palestinians in Israeli jails without trial, and subjecting them to beating, harassment and harsh ill-treatment, are practices which continue to haunt Palestinians in their everyday life.

I regret to inform 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 number of Palestinian martyrs, since September 2000, has risen to at least 2,020 with at least 21,326 others wounded, most of whom sustained severe and permanent disabilities.

In the 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, urging it to refrain from all of the above-mentioned serious violations and grave breaches of international law and international humanitarian law and all the atrocities and heinous crimes being committed against the Palestinian people.

We also appeal to Your Excellency to use all your good offices to provide for an international protection force and presence in Palestine to monitor these daily Israeli aggressions, massacres and crimes and to protect the Palestinian population 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 the present letter distributed 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

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