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### Arbour condemns violations of International Law in Gaza and Israel

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour expressed alarm Monday about the violence that has been taking place in Gaza and Israel over the past few days.

While recognizing Israel's right to defend itself, Arbour condemned the Israeli Defence Force's disproportionate use of force. The High Commissioner called for an impartial investigation into the reported killing of dozens of civilians, including children, in the IDF operation.

Arbour also strongly condemned the rocket attacks by Palestinian militants against Israeli civilian targets. "These attacks are in clear violation of international humanitarian law," she said, "and those responsible must be held to account."

Arbour stressed that Israel, as the occupying power, bears a particular responsibility under international human rights and humanitarian law to protect the civilian population and civilian installations in Gaza. She called on the government of Israel to conduct impartial investigations into the killings of civilians, make the findings public and hold any perpetrators accountable. She also reiterated her earlier warning that collective punishment is prohibited under international law.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights urged the international community to step up pressure on both sides to uphold their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law, and to ensure that failure to do so is dealt with appropriately.

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