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## UN rights experts express deep concern about ongoing bloodletting in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

GENEVA (16 November 2015) – Two United Nations Special Rapporteurs today expressed grave concern over the continuing violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) and Israel since the beginning of October, in which over 80 Palestinians and around 15 Israelis have reportedly been killed. In addition, thousands of Palestinians and more than 100 Israelis have been injured.

The human rights experts' call for an end to the violence by all and strict compliance with international law comes following allegations of the killing of a Palestinian shot dead by Israeli forces during an undercover arrest operation in a Hebron hospital on Thursday last week. Further fatalities, Israeli and Palestinian, were reported last Friday and over the weekend.

"Cases of excessive use of force by Israeli forces against Palestinians, including some which appear to amount to summary executions, continue to be reported and some have been captured on video," said the UN Special Rapporteurs on the situation of human rights in the OPT, Makarim Wibisono, and on summary executions, Christof Heyns.

"The current escalation of violence with individual attacks by Palestinians against Israelis, excessive use of force by Israeli forces when apprehending Palestinian suspects of alleged attacks and in the context of clashes, as well as violent attacks by settlers against Palestinians, is occurring within the existing context of policies and practices under the longstanding Israeli occupation which entail violations of Palestinian human rights and raise tensions," the experts noted. "In such a climate one would expect the leaders to make public calls to stop the carnage."

Mr. Wibisono expressed particular concern over the high level of incidents and clashes in the occupied West Bank city of Hebron, where Palestinians live in close proximity to a large settler population: "It is sadly a predictable flashpoint, but I strongly reiterate that Israeli security forces must abide by international standards on use of force," he stressed. "In addition, there must not be impunity for settler violence".

The experts welcomed the reported clarification by Israeli Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein to the effect that Israeli security forces are prohibited from firing at a suspected assailant unless an immediate danger to human life cannot otherwise be prevented and that the use of fire must be proportional to the threat.

"This is an important statement as the rhetoric used by certain Israeli politicians and senior members of the police seems to suggest otherwise," Mr. Heyns said. "International law allows the use of lethal force only where it is absolutely necessary - a last measure - to protect life. All uses of firearms should be considered potentially lethal."

"We urge the authorities to carry out independent, thorough, prompt and impartial investigations into all suspected cases of extra-judicial, arbitrary and summary executions, and to provide compensation to the victims or their families," the experts stated.

In 2014, the UN Human Rights Council designated Mr. **Makarim Wibisono** (Indonesia) as the sixth Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. The mandate was originally established in 1993 by the UN Commission on Human Rights. Learn more, log on to: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/CountriesMandates/PS/Pages/SRPalestine.aspx>

The Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Mr. **Christof Heyns** (South Africa), is a director of the Institute for International and Comparative Law in Africa and Professor of Human Rights Law at the University of Pretoria, where he has also directed the Centre for Human Rights, and has engaged in wide-reaching initiatives on human rights in Africa. He has advised a number of international, regional and national entities on human rights issues. Learn more, log on to: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Executions/Pages/SRExecutionsIndex.aspx>

The Special Rapporteurs are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures' experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity. UN Human Rights, Country Pages:

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