



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
9 September 2022

English only

---

## Human Rights Council

### Fifty-first session

12 September–7 October 2022

Agenda item 7

### Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories

## Written statement\* submitted by Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 August 2022]

---

\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



## **Lack of Accountability Encourages Israel to Commit More Crimes Against the Palestinian People**

The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) have launched yet again a criminal military operation against the besieged Gaza Strip, killing and wounding innocent Palestinian civilians and destroying dozens of houses and residential buildings. The operation, named “Breaking Dawn”, lasted for three days and was the most serious escalation the Gaza Strip has witnessed since the 11-day Israeli aggression in May 2021. According to PCHR’s documentation, 32 Palestinians were killed by Israeli attacks, amongst them 19 civilians, including 8 children and 3 women, and 159 others were wounded.

During the operation, IOF launched several attacks targeting Palestinian civilians and civilian objects in complete disregard for the principle of distinction, one of the main principles of international humanitarian law, which provides that parties to an armed conflict must “at all time distinguish between the civilian population and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives and accordingly shall direct their operations only against military objectives.”

On 7 August 2022, at approximately 7:00 pm, Israeli warplanes brutally targeted a group of children who were playing next to their grandfather’s tomb in Al-Falouja cemetery in Jabalya camp, north of the Gaza Strip. As a result, five children, four of them from the same family, were killed: J.E.N. 13, J.N.A.N. 4, H.H.N., 16, M.S.N., 16, and N.F. A.K., 14. According to a testimony provided to PCHR by E.N., J.E.N.’s father, the children’s body parts were scattered all over the place to the extent that he could not identify his own son, J.E.N.

On the same day, at approximately the same time, the IOF committed another massacre against Palestinian civilians. This time, an Israeli warplane targeted with one missile a horse-drawn carriage, used for collecting garbage in Omar Al-Mukhtar Street in the middle of Gaza city and killed the two persons riding the carriage, Shady Keheil, 27, and his friend, Khaled Yassin, 27, who risked leaving their homes during the military operation to provide for their poor families. Two more people were also killed in the incident. Abdel-Rahman Al-Silik, 22, who was by chance in a taxi near the targeted place and a police office, Mahmoud Dawood, 21, who was injured while sitting in his cabin at the time of the attack and later succumbed to his wounds.

In both of these incidents, there was no suspicious military activity near the targeted place nor there were personnel from Palestinian resistance groups between the victims which can provide any kind of justification for the targeting of civilians in broad daylight, except that the targeting was deliberate. It was clear to the IOF warplanes what they were targeting.

These intentional attacks against civilians do not come as a surprise. This is the fourth major operation that the Gaza Strip has been subjected to in the last 14 years.

In 2009, during Operation Cast Lead, a total of 1,419 Palestinians were killed by IOF attacks, of whom 1,167 (82%) were civilians, 5,300 people were injured, and around 5,356 houses were completely or partially destroyed. In 2012, during Operation Pillar of Defense, IOF killed 171 Palestinians, amongst them 102 (60%) civilians, including 35 children and 14 women, 648 others were wounded, and 286 houses were completely or partially destroyed. In 2014, during Operation Protective Edge, 2217 Palestinians were killed, of whom 1543 (70%) civilians, including 556 children and 293 women and 31,974 houses were completely or partially destroyed.

In all its operations on the Strip, including Operation Breaking Dawn, Israel committed systematic and flagrant violations of international humanitarian law, which amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, in particular under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Among these crimes are: indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force; willful killing, including by bombarding houses while residents were inside; extensive, unnecessary and wanton destruction of property, among others.

In the West Bank, Israel has consistently displayed a callous disregard for the lives of Palestinians as well. Since the start of the year, IOF killed 61 Palestinian civilians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Mohammed Ibrahim Shaham 21, was killed by cold blood in front of his family’s eyes when IOF broke into his house at 3:30 am in Kufr Aqab, north of

occupied East Jerusalem on 15 August 2022. His father told PCHR that the soldiers blew up the house's main door and killed Mohammed immediately without warning and without even checking his identity. He was left on the ground bleeding for 40 minutes without receiving any kind of medical treatment while his family were locked in an apartment next door by the soldiers. Mohammed's father said that one of the soldiers told him that they raided the wrong house and shot Mohammed by mistake. Mohammed's case is illustrative of the decades-long contempt for Palestinian lives and dignity.

Despite the repeated human rights violations and crimes committed in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied Palestinian Territory at large, the international community has systematically failed to hold Israel accountable. Protected by the culture of impunity, Israel has seen, once and again, that there is no political or economic cost to pay for its human rights violations which might force it to change its unlawful policies or practices, refrain from committing crimes and abide by its legal obligations.

Condemnations are not enough. The international community must immediately start taking concrete action to hold Israel accountable, including through sanctions and supporting efforts to take Israel before the International Court (ICC). By failing to take immediate and direct action, Palestinians will continue to face systematic and intensified attacks by the occupying power.

---