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**QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE
OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE**

**Letter dated 11 August 2003 from the Permanent Observer for Palestine
to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the United Nations
High Commissioner for Human Rights**

About 45 days ago, a three-month truce was announced on behalf of all Palestinian political factions, as a move by which Palestinians sought to defuse the Israeli war, which destroyed their lives, property and the totality of their infrastructure. Despite this agreement on the truce by all Palestinian groups, the Israeli Government still persists, in violation of the road map, and also in flagrant violation of all the norms of international law, international humanitarian law and all the signed agreements between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority, in its acts of invading, killing, demolishing, land sweeping and detaining.

During the last weeks, while Palestinians as well as the international community were expecting a breakthrough in the Israeli practices against Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory, Israel has escalated even further its repressive actions against Palestinians living under its occupation.

On Friday, 8 August 2003, Israeli occupation forces killed four Palestinians after raiding the northern West Bank refugee camp of Askar. The Israeli occupation forces, backed by armoured vehicles, stormed the Askar refugee camp, surrounded and shelled a civilian four-story building; conducted house-to-house searches, placed the area under curfew and barred access to ambulances. Two victims were killed in the building, identified as Fayez Assader, 26, and Khamis Abu Salem, 22.

Two other Palestinians were killed in protests following the raid: a man of 20 was shot dead and a 41-year-old bystander who inhaled tear gas sprayed by the occupation soldiers. These other two victims are identified as Fawzi el-A`lami and Mohammad Ahmad Yaseen.

On the same day, at least three Palestinians were wounded, one seriously, during an incursion by Israeli occupation forces into the northern West Bank town of Jenin.

Also on that Friday, Israeli occupation forces troops raided the northern West Bank town of Tubas and detained five Palestinians. The detainees were identified as Ali Draghmah, Abdullah Draghmah, Mohamed Daraghmah, Mohamed Abu Mehsen and Hasan Abu Mehsen.

Meanwhile, the Israeli occupation forces continue to launch on a daily basis repressive attacks against Palestinian facilities, cities, towns, villages and camps. They also persist in their policy of restricting the freedom of movement of Palestinians at Israeli roadblocks and inside Palestinian areas, exposing them in this way to all forms of humiliation in an attempt to provoke them so that they could shoot them in cold blood.

Such actions not only compound the suffering of the Palestinian people and exacerbate the already grave situation on the ground, but also undermine efforts to make even minimal progress with regard to the implementation of the road map.

The last - but not least - Israeli move, in its so-called implementation of the road map but aimed at deceiving public opinion, was the arrest by the Israeli occupation forces early last Wednesday, only hours before the release of slightly more than 300 detainees, of 18 Palestinian security officers when a column of around 20 jeeps and armoured personnel carriers advanced 500 metres into Maghtas Street in downtown Jericho. A curfew was immediately imposed.

Furthermore, almost half of the prisoners being freed by Israel were "administrative detainees" held without charge. Of the remaining prisoners serving sentences, 80 per cent were in the final year of their terms.

Earlier, since Monday, 28 July, Israeli occupation forces have attacked several Palestinian and foreign peace activists protesting in the northern West Bank against the separation wall near the village of Deir al Ghossoon, east of the northern West Bank town of Jenin. Soldiers fired rubber bullets at about 300 Palestinians and 60 foreign supporters, injuring at least 3 Palestinians and 8 foreigners.

In addition, while the first phase of the so-called road map calls for an Israeli settlement freeze, Israel announced plans for the construction of 11,806 housing units in settlements, including 1,054 in Givat Ze'ev; 3,271 in Ariel; 3,200 in Betar Ilit; 1,512 in Giva Benjamim; and 4,281 in Ma'ale Adumim. Moreover, building work continues on bypass roads throughout the occupied areas.

In the light of the persistence of Israel in its criminal practices violating the road map, as well as its systematic violations of human rights and of the principles of international law and international humanitarian law, in particular the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to

the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and the Protocol Additional thereto, we appeal to Your Excellency to condemn, in the strongest terms, the persistence of these Israeli illegal practices and crimes committed on a daily basis against the Palestinian people, crimes for which Israel, the occupying Power, should be held accountable and the perpetrators are to be brought to justice.

We also appeal to Your Excellency to provide international protection for the Palestinian people under the Israeli military occupation until Israel has withdrawn from all the Palestinian territories it has occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem.

I would be most grateful if you could arrange to have this letter distributed as an official document to the Commission on Human Rights.

(Signed): Nabil RAMLAWI
Ambassador
Permanent Observer
