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Public Statement

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Israel/Occupied Territories: Amnesty International condemns killing of Palestinians by Israeli settler, calls for urgent measures to end settlers' impunity

Four Palestinians were shot dead and two others were injured by an Israeli settler yesterday evening as they were returning home from their work at a factory in the Israeli settlement of Shilo, in the West Bank.

The settler, a driver from the Israeli settlement of Shvut Rahel, was transporting Palestinians who work in a factory in the Shilo settlement to nearby Palestinian villages. He shot dead three Palestinian workers at the gate of the settlement and then went back to the industrial area, where he shot at other Palestinian workers, killing one of them and injuring two others.

There are conflicting reports as to whether he took the weapon he used for the shooting attack from a security guard of the settlement or used his own.

This is the second lethal shooting by an Israeli settler in as many weeks. On 4 August, an Israeli settler from the West Bank settlement of Tapuah shot dead four Palestinian citizens of Israel on a bus in the town of Shfaram, in the North of Israel. The settler was an activist of the outlawed Kach movement, which calls for the expulsion of Palestinian from Israel and the Occupied Territories.

These deliberate killings by Israeli settlers follow an increase in the past year and a half in attacks against Palestinians and their property by Israeli settlers. In recent months Israeli intelligence and security officials have warned about the risk of increased violent attacks against Palestinians by Israeli settlers seeking to disrupt the Israeli pullout from the Gaza Strip.

However, Israeli settlers in the Occupied Territories continue to be allowed to carry weapons and the Israeli authorities have taken no concrete measures to prevent the daily harassment and attacks against Palestinians and their property by Israeli settlers throughout the West Bank.

The consistent failure of the Israeli authorities to prevent attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and to investigate such attacks and bring settlers to justice has created an atmosphere of impunity, which has ultimately encouraged further attacks.

Amnesty International reiterates its call on the Israeli authorities to urgently take concrete and effective measures to prevent attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinians, to carry out prompt and independent investigations into each and every attack, and to bring to justice all those responsible.

