

PUBLIC

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Fear for Safety: Civilians

2 August 2001

**ISRAEL/OCCUPIED TERRITORIES/PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY**

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Israel continues to target activists in Palestinian armed political groups, such as *Hamas* and *Fatah*, for assassination. In the latest extrajudicial execution, eight Palestinians were killed, including two children and two journalists. Fifteen others were wounded, including a human rights defender, Ahmad Abu Shellal, of the human rights organization International Solidarity, whose medical condition remains critical.

Statements made by leaders of *Hamas* after the killing raise fears that supporters of *Hamas* may target Israeli civilians for deliberate killing in revenge.

The Israeli Government has had a policy of "liquidating" Palestinians suspected of membership of armed groups opposing Israeli occupation. Such extrajudicial executions are totally prohibited under international law. The Israeli authorities have continued this policy notwithstanding worldwide condemnation. Over the past nine months the Israeli forces have extra-judicially executed at least 30 activists, killing at least 20 other Palestinians during these missile or machine-gun attacks.

The latest attack, on 31 July, was apparently intended to kill *Hamas* leaders Jamal Salim and Jamal Mansur who both died in the attack. Jamal Mansur's case had been taken up by Amnesty International when he spent more than three years in detention without charge or trial in the Palestinian Authority between 1997 and 2000. A leader of the political wing of *Hamas*, he was a journalist and publicist who ran the Nablus-based Palestinian Centre for Information which was targeted by two shells from an Apache helicopter.

Two children, Ashraf Khader, age 6, and Bilal Khader, age 11, who were playing outside while their mother visited a clinic in the building, were also killed in the attack, as were two journalists, Muhammad Beshawi and 'Uthman Qatanan, and two others. Among the at least 15 people wounded was Ahmad Abu Shellal, a human rights defender from the human rights organization International Solidarity, who is now in a critical condition in intensive care.

Following the attack, Shaykh Ahmad Yassin, the leader of *Hamas* told reporters: "The Israeli people should know that they will pay the price, because our blood is not cheap."

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Since 29 September 2000, when the present Palestinian *intifada* started, more than 500 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli security services. The vast majority of those killed have been unlawfully killed when no other lives were in danger. At least 30 Palestinians have been killed in targeted attacks by Israeli security services which have also killed some 20 other people. Israeli armed groups or individual settlers have deliberately killed at least 10 Palestinians.

Palestinian armed groups or individuals have killed at least 130 Israelis and others, including 90 civilians deliberately killed in drive by shootings or suicide bombings.

At least 140 of the Palestinians killed and 20 of the Israelis killed have been children.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:**

**To the Israeli authorities:**

- condemning the killings in Nablus and calling on the Israeli Government, the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) and the Israeli Air Force (IAF) to stop unlawful killings;

- reminding them that under international human rights law, lethal force should only be used when life is in imminent danger;
- pointing out that extrajudicial executions, such as those of Jamal Mansur and Jamal Salim are absolutely prohibited under international law.

**APPEALS TO:**

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon  
Office of the Prime Minister  
3 Kaplan Street, PO Box 187  
Kiryat Ben-Gurion  
Jerusalem 91919  
Via Israel

**Telegrams: Prime Minister, Jerusalem**

**Fax: + 972 2 651 2631**

**Salutation: Dear Prime Minister**

Lieutenant-General Shaul Mufaz  
Chief of General Staff  
c/o Ministry of Defence  
7 'A' Street  
Hakiryia  
Tel Aviv  
Israel

**Fax: + 972 3 691 6940**

**Salutation: Dear Lieutenant-General**

Major-General Dan Halutz  
Commander in Chief of the IAF  
c/o Ministry of Defence  
7 'A' Street  
Hakiryia  
Tel Aviv  
Israel

**To Hamas:**

- calling for Palestinian armed groups to respect fundamental principles of international humanitarian law and to refrain from attacking civilians.

**APPEALS TO:**

Shaykh Ahmad Yassin  
Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas)  
Gaza  
Palestinian Authority

**Faxes: + 972 8 286 6990**

**Telegrams Sheykh Ahmad Yassin, Hamas, Gaza, Palestinian Authority**

**Salutation: Dear Shaykh Ahmad Yassin**

**COPIES TO:** diplomatic representatives of Israel and the Palestinian Authority accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 13 September 2001.