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Israel/Occupied Territories: Statement to the UN Commission of Human Rights
United Nations Commission on Human Rights
58th Session (18 March – 29 April 2002)

*Item 4: Special Sitting in response to the High Commissioner's Statement
on the
Human Rights Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories*

**JOINT STATEMENT BY AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND
THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS**

Distributed on 5 April 2002

Chairperson

There are many victims of the grave abuses of human rights in Israel and the Occupied Territories over the past week. There are the Palestinians, including medical workers, who have been killed unlawfully by the Israeli Defence Forces. There are the Israeli civilians who have been deliberately targeted by Palestinian armed groups and individuals. Palestinians have also been unlawfully killed by other Palestinians.

Palestinians have been confined to their houses, shot if they ventured out, and left without electricity, water and diminishing food supplies for days. There are the hundreds of Palestinians who have been arrested; ill-treated and humiliated during their detention; and their families who enquire for news of their relatives and fear they may be dead. There are Palestinians, mostly children, whose homes have been destroyed and their belongings shattered. There are the Palestinian human rights organizations, who try to monitor and investigate the human rights violations which the Israeli State should investigate and whose offices have been trashed by the IDF, and the journalists who are targeted or expelled as they try to report what is carried out in secrecy.

These are all victims over the past week in a human rights crisis which has continued unresolved for decades. But there is another victim: the credibility of the system of international human rights and humanitarian law which the international community has established in the aftermath of World War II. If the international community talks, but fails to act, while the fundamental principles of human rights and humanitarian law are violated then the Commission on Human Rights has betrayed the trust vested in it.

In the name of Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists, we urge the Commission to support the call to send international monitors to the region with a strong and transparent human rights mandate. We support the proposal of the High Commissioner for Human Rights that the Commission on Human Rights send a visiting mission to the area. We urge the Commission to send a strong message upholding respect for human rights. There can be no durable ceasefire or peace agreement unless the fundamental human rights of all Palestinians and all Israelis are addressed.

THANKYOU CHAIRPERSON.

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