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Israel/Occupied Territories: Practical measures are required - words are not enough

As the UN Security Council meets today to discuss the grave situation in Israel and the Occupied Territories, Amnesty International reiterates its calls for an international inquiry into alleged human rights abuses against Palestinians in Jenin Refugee Camp since 3 April 2002, and the deployment of international human rights monitors.

Amnesty International delegates in Jenin said "There is strong evidence that human rights and international humanitarian law were breached in Jenin by the Israeli Defence Forces."

Amnesty International delegate, Derrick Pounder, a forensic pathologist, performed autopsies on two bodies in Jenin Hospital both of which gave "cause for suspicion". Delegates heard accounts of houses demolished with people still inside them, and reports of extrajudicial executions.

"The longer the bodies deteriorate, the more the evidence deteriorates," said Professor Pounder. "These facts call out for an urgent independent, international, expert inquiry," Amnesty International said.

In a statement submitted to the Security Council yesterday, Amnesty International repeated its call for the deployment of expert human rights monitors, which could save Palestinian and Israeli lives. These experts must be mandated to monitor, investigate and report on the respect for international human rights and international

humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention. Monitors must be able to visit all places and interview individuals freely and confidentially. Both the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority must permit and assist monitors to work effectively within their jurisdictions and take all necessary measures to ensure the monitors' security.

Speaking from Jenin Refugee camp, Javier Zuniga of Amnesty International said, "Independent and impartial reporting is urgently required as are measures to ensure that the desperately needed humanitarian assistance is not obstructed and reaches those in need. Practical measures are required -- words are not enough."

Amnesty International's 18 April statement to the UN Security Council (AI Index: MDE 01/003/2002) on the deployment of monitors is available on request.

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