

11 October 2000

AI Index MDE 15/036/2000 - News Service Nr. 197

### **Israel/Occupied Territories: Amnesty International expresses concern for civilians' safety**

*Amnesty International expressed grave concern for the safety of civilians, following Israeli military helicopter attacks in Gaza City and Ramallah which reportedly injured Palestinian civilians.*

*In response to the attacks, the organization appealed for respect for human rights and protection of civilian lives.*

*"The events of the past two weeks, in which about 100 people have lost their lives and hundreds of others have been injured, have created a climate in which human rights violations will flourish unless there is absolute respect for the rule of law, including fundamental principles of human rights and humanitarian law," the organization said.*

*Israeli helicopter gunships fired on targets in Ramallah/al-Bireh and Gaza City earlier today near the Palestinian Authority's headquarters in those towns. There have been reports that civilians have been injured in Ramallah/al-Bireh.*

*According to media reports the Israel Defence Forces has stated: "Army helicopters today attacked Palestinian police buildings where two army reservist were lynched, as well as other targets. ... This operation was a symbolic warning to the Palestinian leadership to let it know we will not stand idly by in the face of violence,"*

*The attacks appeared to be in response to the reported killing of at least two Israeli soldiers in Ramallah/al-Bireh earlier today. The exact*

circumstances of their deaths remain unclear. A group of soldiers were in the custody of the Palestinian Authority at the Ramallah/al-Bireh police headquarters. A large number of civilians reportedly entered the police station and attacked the soldiers. The Palestinian Authority has stated that it made all efforts to protect the soldiers, but was unable to do so. According to media reports the Israeli government holds the Palestinian Authority responsible for the attacks.

"Today's events confirm the need for the United Nations to establish urgently an independent international investigation to investigate all allegations of serious human rights abuses that have taken place since 29 September in Israel, the Occupied Territories and south Lebanon," the organization said.

### **Background**

The Amnesty International delegation has been on the ground in Israel and the Occupied Territories, including the areas under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority, since 4 October. The delegation consists of Dr. Stephen Males, a former senior British police officer with special expertise in sensitive public order policing, and Dr Elizabeth Hodgkin, a researcher from Amnesty International's International Secretariat.

The Amnesty International delegation can be reached in Israel on +972 50 576 032

See also:

Israel/Occupied Territories/Lebanon: Amnesty International calls for UN investigation

9 October 2000 AI Index MDE 15/035/2000 - News service Nr. 193

Israel/Occupied Territories: Amnesty International sends delegates to Israel

4 October 2000 AI Index MDE 15/034/2000 - News Service Nr. 189

*Israel and the Occupied Territories: Civilians' lives must be respected*  
*2 October 2000 AI Index MDE 15/032/2000 - News Service Nr. 187*

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