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4 MARCH 1996

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES INCLUDING THE AREAS UNDER THE  
PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNS SUICIDE  
BOMBING AND URGES SAFEGUARDING OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Amnesty International condemns yesterday's suicide-bombing in Jerusalem which killed 19 people including two soldiers and the suicide-bomber.

The bomb exploded about 6.25am on Jerusalem's main Jaffa Street at almost the same time and place as a suicide-bomb last week which killed 26 people.

"We call on *Hamas* to immediately stop this deliberate and arbitrary targeting of civilians. Such killings are an abuse of fundamental principles of international humanitarian law," Amnesty International said today.

The international human rights organization reiterated its call to the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to adhere strictly to international human rights standards and humanitarian principles in any response it makes to these attacks.

"Abuses, however gross, by armed opposition groups should never be an excuse for authorities to violate human rights," Amnesty International said.

The organization expressed concern at the Israeli Government's announcement that it would seal or destroy the houses of the families of the suicide bombers, who are all said to come from Hebron, within the area still directly controlled by the Israeli Government. Amnesty International opposes the sealing or destruction of houses carried out as a punishment by governments.

At least 250 people are said to have been arrested by the Palestinian Authority in the Gaza Strip and an unknown number have been arrested from the West Bank by the Israeli Government and by the Palestinian Authority. In the past supporters of Hamas have suffered torture or ill-treatment at the hands of Israeli and Palestinian security services.

"Governments have the right and the duty to bring to justice those who have committed or ordered crimes," Amnesty International said.

"We understand the grief and horror caused by these bombings of civilians. However, we strongly urge both the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority, in their justifiable desire

to maintain law and order, to maintain international standards allowing prompt access to detainees and prohibiting torture and ill-treatment.”

An announcement on 3 March, reportedly made by *Hamas*, stated that the second bus bombing, like the two bombings on 25 February, were carried out by the “Yahya Ayyash brigades” to avenge Yahya Ayyash. Yahya Ayyash, said to have made bombs used by suicide-bombers in the past, was killed by a booby-trapped mobile telephone in Gaza on 5 January 1996. The Israeli Government has neither denied involvement nor claimed responsibility for the attack.

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