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Palestinian Authority: Hamas and Fatah must end revenge killings, attacks and abductions

The leadership of both Fatah and Hamas must ensure that the security forces and armed militias under their respective control in the West Bank and Gaza Strip put an end to the cycle of abuses that is forcing many people to flee. Many have been forced to leave the Gaza Strip in recent days to escape the deliberate and unlawful killings of Fatah militants and supporters by Hamas gunmen. Similarly, in the West Bank, Hamas members have been forced into hiding by revenge killings, abductions and attacks against their properties carried out by Fatah gunmen.

"Both Fatah and Hamas must put an end to the cycle of revenge killings, attacks and abductions of each others' supporters. They must ensure that detainees are not mistreated and are afforded due judicial process, and that those responsible for abuses are brought to justice in fair trials," said Malcolm Smart, Director of the Middle East and North Africa Programme.

The number of those abducted or detained by each side and their fate is as yet unknown and there are fears that detainees may be used by both sides as bargaining chips to extract concessions by the other side, or may even be killed.

"The political leadership on each side has condemned killings and attacks by the other side but has kept silent about the abuses committed by its own fighters. While both sides have promised to impose law and order in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, there is no sign so far that concrete measures are being implemented on the ground. In the meantime, the atmosphere of lawlessness and impunity fuels the spiral of violence and revenge," said Malcolm Smart.

Amnesty International also called on Israel to lift the blockade on Gaza and ensure the supply of crucial basic services to Gaza's population. There are growing fears that the dire humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip will deteriorate further, after Israel tightened its blockade on the movement of people and goods in and out of the area, and Israeli companies announced the suspension of electricity and fuel supplies.

The organization reiterates its call on the international community, notably neighbouring countries, to take measures to stop the flow of weapons which fuel the violence and lawlessness in the Gaza Strip and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). Both Israel and Palestinian factions must behave in a manner that would not hinder access to humanitarian relief and medical assistance for the civilian population.

For more information, please see, *Palestinian Authority: Fatah and Hamas violations leave Gaza's civilians trapped in their homes - Growing concerns about violence spreading to the West Bank*, <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE210102007?open&of=ENG-PSE>

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