

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **Israel/Occupied Territories: Governments at General Assembly must now put civilians before politics**

On the eve of the UN General Assembly's resumed special session to discuss the deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Amnesty International urges all UN member states to put human rights at the top of the agenda and agree concrete action to protect the human rights of all people living in the areas affected by the ongoing crisis.

Such concrete action should include independent monitoring of abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law throughout the Occupied Territories and Israel.

Monitors should also be mandated to investigate alleged abuses and to report their findings publicly. Anyone responsible for killings of civilians and other human rights abuses, including war crimes, should be brought to justice and the victims and their families must obtain redress and reparation.

"Political posturing should not be allowed to take priority over the human rights of victims and the civilian population on both sides of the conflict. A visionary approach is now required from the international community in order to halt the appalling abuses of human rights suffered in the Occupied Territories and Israel and to bring peace and security to the region," Amnesty International said

Serious efforts must be made by the international community to overcome differences and to address the situation from an objective standpoint and without double-standards. Amnesty International regrets the vetoing by the United States in the Security Council on 11 November of a resolution condemning attacks on civilians by both Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups. Similarly, the vote by Canada and most EU Human Rights Council members on 15 November against a resolution in the Council which urged all concerned parties to respect international humanitarian law and to refrain from attacking civilians is also deeply regrettable – particularly in the absence of any alternative proposal.

Amnesty International welcomes the resolution of the Human Rights Council on 15 November, to send a fact-finding mission to Beit Hanoun, Gaza Strip, where dozens of Palestinian civilians were killed by Israeli forces in recent days, including 18 members of a family who were killed on 8 November by a volley of artillery shells fired by the Israeli army into a densely populated residential neighbourhood.

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