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ORAL STATEMENT
Item 7: General Debate

UN Human Rights Council
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Madam President,

Amnesty International is deeply concerned about the lack of accountability for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law by the Palestinian authorities, Israeli authorities, and Hamas de facto authorities.

Our concern extends to the lack of implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry this Council established into violations committed in the context of the weekly protests in the Gaza Strip between March and December 2018.

It has been over a year since the publication of the findings of the UN Commission of Inquiry, but Amnesty International's documentation has found that Israeli authorities have done nothing meaningful to implement the recommendations regarding accountability.

Israeli forces continued the unlawful policy of deliberately firing at civilian protestors posing no imminent threat to others, killing at least 214 civilians, including more than 40 children, and injuring 7,996 by live ammunition. In July 2019, after over a year of it being aware that they were leading to unlawful killings and devastating injuries, the Israeli military changed their open-fire regulations, which had allowed snipers to fire at protestors' lower limbs above the knee, but only; snipers were briefed, in the future, to shoot below the knee.

At the same time, Hamas de facto authorities launched dozens of explosive incendiary balloons indiscriminately into Israel causing significant damage to agricultural land and continue to target civilians and civilian objects.

Although the protests have halted for now, authorities on all sides have failed to take measures to ensure accountability for violations.

The Council must ensure that the recommendations for accountability and reparations for victims are implemented. Those responsible for crimes, including those who gave the orders to fire at protestors posing no imminent threat to life, must also be named and held accountable. The international community should take more effective measures to ensure that parties are upholding their obligations under international law.

Amnesty International also welcomes the long-awaited publication of the database of companies involved in business activities in illegal Israeli settlements as an important step towards accountability. Settlements violate international law, are built on unlawfully appropriated land, and have been the cause of a range of gross and systematic human rights violations against

Palestinians.

We continue to urge the Council and the Office to ensure that the list of companies is regularly updated and predictably financed, with clear reporting time frames, to allow for continued scrutiny of businesses linked to human rights violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The situation of human rights defenders in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories also demands urgent attention. All authorities have targeted civil society organizations and their staff in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories and have tightened the space in which they operate.

Human rights defenders are facing continuing attacks by Israel, through restrictive legislation and governmental policies coupled with smear campaigns and raids aimed at delegitimizing human rights work. They also face arbitrary arrests and ill-treatment, intimidation and inflammatory statements by Palestinian authorities.

Since September 2019, Amnesty International's staff member, Laith Abu Zeyad, has been prevented by Israeli authorities from travelling abroad in relation to his human rights work, including to attend this session.

This Council must condemn these attacks, and ensure authorities respect the important role human rights defenders have in the promotion and protection of human rights on the ground.

Thank you.