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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 04/95

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## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES**

Sudan - 25 January - SEE NEWS SERVICES 275 AND 261

Turkey - 8 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 261

Northern Iraq - 28 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 266

## **TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES**

AI INDEX MDE 15/WU 01/95  
6 JANUARY 1995

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS FOR AN END TO EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS

Wednesday's killing of four Palestinians bears the signs of yet another extrajudicial execution by Israeli undercover agents, Amnesty International said today as it condemned the killings and called on Israel to stop extrajudicial executions by its security forces.

"Nine days after General Yoram Yair announced a new code of ethics for the Israeli army, an undercover unit has once again shown a complete disregard for legality and the basic right to life," Amnesty International said.

The human rights organization is calling on the Israeli Government to open an immediate and public inquiry into the killings at Beit Liqya.

"Any undercover unit should be given clear instructions not to commit extrajudicial executions," Amnesty International said. "Impunity for members of undercover units and those who order such killings should be stopped".

BACKGROUND:

The four Palestinians killed -- Jihad Assi, 26; Ali Mafarja, 32; Ashraf Mafarja, 17; and Muhammad Assi, 16 -- were reportedly leaving the village of Beit Liqya, in the West Bank, by car, when they were fired on by men in plain clothes lying in wait in a volkswagen transporter van. The gunfire was reportedly so intense that eye-witnesses were not able to say whether there was any answering fire. The volkswagen van then allegedly left the scene and members of the Israeli Defence Forces collected the bodies a few minutes later.

The information given by eye-witnesses contradicts the official Israeli army account of the killings, which does not mention an undercover unit and states that soldiers operating in the area were shot at from a car, wounding one soldier lightly in the foot.

Two of the victims were supporters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) which opposes the peace agreement with Israel; they were reportedly wanted by police.

The killings come two days after Israeli soldiers killed three Palestinian policemen in disputed circumstances at Beit Hanoun in the Gaza Strip. The killings are being investigated by a joint Palestinian-Israeli inquiry.  
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