
amnesty international

Israel and the Occupied Territories

@Killings by Israeli Forces: an upsurge in 1993

CASES FOR APPEALS

Background

Since the start of the Palestinian intifada or uprising in December 1987, more than 1,000 Palestinians have been shot dead by Israeli forces. More than 200 of these were aged 16 or under. Many were killed during clashes with the army or border police; others were shot by soldiers or undercover units apparently while trying to escape arrest. An alarmingly high number of Palestinians, including women and children, have been killed while apparently not engaging in any violent activity at all. Amnesty International believes that many of these killings are absolutely unjustifiable, and that some may amount to extra-judicial executions.

The Palestinian opposition to the Israeli occupation of the Territories, known as the intifada, has taken a number of forms. These include regular commercial and transport strikes, organized tax boycotts and other non-violent forms of protest. There have been demonstrations sometimes on a large scale. Israeli forces and civilians have been the target of attacks by stones, petrol bombs and other missiles. With increasing frequency, knives and firearms have been used. More than 90 Israeli civilians have been killed by Palestinians since the start of the intifada, along with more than 700 Palestinians alleged to have collaborated with the Israeli authorities.

The Israeli Defence Force (IDF), the paramilitary Border Police, and other forces responsible for law enforcement in the Occupied Territories have tried to stop disturbances by using tear gas, beatings and by firearms. At least four types of ammunition, including live bullets are used. The use of force in such circumstances has often been excessive and indiscriminate, resulting in hundreds of deaths and tens of thousands of injuries.

Israeli guidelines on opening fire permit the use of live ammunition in arresting suspects and also in life-threatening situations, which according to the authorities may in certain circumstances include stone-throwing. An investigation by the army's judicial unit is also apparently opened automatically into every case of killing by soldiers. Amnesty International believes that the guidelines on opening fire - which may in themselves permit the unjustifiable use of force in some circumstances - are frequently violated, and that the investigations into resultant deaths are inadequate. The investigations often take months to complete, the results are not automatically widely publicised, and information concerning the procedures followed during the investigation is not available, making it difficult to assess its thoroughness and impartiality.

In May 1993, following an upsurge in killings since December 1992, an Amnesty International delegation visited the Occupied Gaza Strip, scene of about 80 of the more than 100 killings which have occurred since mid-December 1992. The delegation looked into a number of cases of recent killings including some of children which appeared to have taken place when the victim was not involved in any violent activity.

The four cases featured here are those of the children whose killings were investigated by Amnesty International. The Israeli government has promised to respond to these cases.

RANA ABU TUYUR

Rana Abu Tuyur, aged 11, lived in Khan Yunes in the southern part of the Gaza Strip. The town had been placed under curfew six days previously in the aftermath of the killing of three soldiers and the taking hostage of an Israeli Border Policemen claimed by Hamas (an armed opposition group). He was subsequently killed.

In the mid-afternoon of 19 December, the day after more than 400 Palestinians were deported to south Lebanon in retaliation for these attacks, the curfew was lifted for the first time. Israeli army vehicles are said to have patrolled through the town, announcing that women could leave their houses to buy provisions.

Rana Abu Tuyur was sent out by her mother with a milk jug and told to fetch some fresh milk from a nearby neighbour for a younger child. She reached a road where clashes had broken out between Israeli forces and youths who had defied the curfew restrictions. Eyewitnesses say that Rana Abu Tuyur was on the opposite side of the road to a group of soldiers, at a distance of between 50 - 100 metres. A group of stone-throwing youths coming from the direction of a local mosque are said to have been about 500 metres further down the road. The soldiers were apparently firing at anyone who tried to cross the road.

One of the soldiers opened fire and hit Rana Abu Tuyur in the front of the chest, the bullet exiting from her back. She lay there for a short time while soldiers continued shooting. Then some neighbours were able to reach her and take her in a civilian car to hospital. The car was apparently shot at on the way. Rana Abu Tuyur was dead on arrival in the Naser hospital in Khan Yunes. Five other people were killed in demonstrations in Khan Yunes that day.

Rana Abu Tuyur's father was summoned to the Civil Administration after several weeks to give details about the killing. By the middle of May 1993, he had not been informed of any results of the official investigation.

Please send appeals to:

**Mr Yitzhak Rabin
Prime Minister and Minister of Defence
Office of the Prime Minister
3 Kaplan Street
Hakiryia
Jerusalem 91919
Israel**

Fax: 872-2-664 838

**Brigadier-General Ilan Shiff
Judge Advocate General
6, David Elazar Street
Hakiryia
Tel Aviv**

Israel

Fax: 872-3-508 6504

**Col Yom-Tov Samiah
Commander of the Gaza Strip
Gaza Civil Administration
Gaza City
Via Israel**

Fax: 872-7-884 500

- **expressing extreme concern at the killing of Rana Abu Tuyur;**
- **asking to be informed of the results of the investigation into Rana Abu Tuyur's death, as well as to be given detailed information about the procedures used to carry out the investigation;**
- **calling for anyone found to be responsible for abuses to be brought to justice;**
- **calling on the government to take urgent measures to stop unjustifiable killings of civilians, including by reviewing the guidelines on opening fire, and making it clear to Israeli forces that abuses will not be tolerated.**

Copies of your appeals can be sent to:

**Judge Yosef Harish
Attorney General
P.O. Box 1087
Jerusalem
Israel**

and to diplomatic representatives of Israel in your country.

Ra'edah Umar `Abd Rabbo al-Qarra

At about 2.30 p.m. on 8 April, 1993, 13-year old Ra'edah al-Qarra was playing in the courtyard of her home in Bani Suhayla village with her brother Muhammad. The village is said to have been quiet that day with no clashes reported.

Some soldiers appeared on the street, some 400-500 metres away from the house. Groups of young children on the street began shouting that soldiers had arrived. Neighbours are adamant that there was no stone-throwing occurring.

On hearing the shouts, Ra'edah and her brother went out to look. Ra'edah stood by the corner of the courtyard which was surrounded by cactus plants.

According to Muhammad and other eyewitnesses, one of the soldiers took aim and fired without warning in the direction of the children. One shot is said to have hit a cactus plant next to Ra'edah; the second hit her in the left eye, and she fell to the ground.

Ra'edah was picked up by family members and neighbours who took her in a civilian car to Naser Hospital in Khan Yunes. On the way, they met an ambulance and she was transferred to Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, where she died at about 4.15 p.m.

About an hour after the incident, her family says that an army investigator came to the house and asked some questions about the incident, including whether there had been any stone-throwing. The next day some other soldiers came and dug up the cactus plants around the area where she had been standing. Her family had not been informed of the results of the investigation by mid-May 1993.

Please send appeals to:

Mr. Yitzhak Rabin
Prime Minister & Minister of Defence
Office of the Prime Minister
3 Kaplan Street
Hakiryia
Jerusalem 919919
Israel

Fax: +972-2-604838

Brigadier-General Ilan Shiff
6 David Elazar Street
Hakiryia
Tel Aviv
Israel

Fax: +972-3-568-8684

Col. Yom-Tov Samiah
Commander of the Gaza Strip
Gaza Civil Administration
Gaza City

Via Israel

Fax: +972-7-884500

- expressing extreme concern at the killing of Ra'edah 'Umar 'Abed Rabbo al-Qarra;
- asking to be informed of the results of the investigation into the killing of Ra'edah al-Qarra, as well as to be given detailed information about the procedures used to carry out the investigation;
- calling for anyone found to be responsible for abuses to be brought to justice;
- calling on the government to take urgent measures to stop unjustifiable killings of civilians, including by reviewing the guidelines on opening fire, and making it clear to Israeli forces that abuses will not be tolerated.

Copies of your appeals to be sent to:

Judge Yosef Harish
Attorney General
P.O.Box 1087
Jerusalem
Israel

and to diplomatic representatives of Israel in your country.

Maher Na'im 'Umar al-Maja'idah

In the mid-afternoon of 20 March 1993, eight-year-old Maher al-Maja'idah was walking in al-Bahr street in Khan Yunes in the southern Gaza Strip. It was a few days before the feast of 'Id al-'Adha which celebrates the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. The street was busy, with people making preparations for the forthcoming feast.

A group of about six soldiers stationed on the roof of a building on the street came down and started walking up the street towards a second building, three on each side of the street.

Eyewitnesses say the soldiers were equipped with telescopic sights on their weapons and appeared nervous, pointing their guns at people in the street. After they had walked perhaps 100 metres, the last soldier on the right hand side of the road suddenly turned around, raised his gun to his head and fired a single shot without shouting any warning.

The shot hit Maher al-Maja'idah on the left side of the chest. He apparently tried to run a few metres with his hand clutched to his chest, and then fell down with blood coming out of his mouth. Riyad Abu Jami', aged about 19, who was nearby, ran to help Maher. The same soldier is said to have fired a second shot, hitting Riyad in the chest. Further shots were also fired, preventing others from going to help.

Eventually a civilian car came and took the two to hospital, where Maher died shortly afterwards. Riyad Abu Jami' survived after treatment. One human rights worker who was present at the incident says that as he died, Maher al-Maja'idah was still clutching a biscuit he had been holding.

Please send appeals to:

Mr Yitzhak Rabin
Prime Minister and Minister of Defence
Office of the Prime Minister
3 Kaplan Street
Hakiryia
Jerusalem 91919
Israel

Fax: +972-2-604 838

Brigadier-General Ilan Shiff
Judge Advocate General
6 David Elazar Street
Hakiryia
Tel Aviv
Israel

Fax: +972-3-568 6504

Col Yom-Tov Samiah
Commander of the Gaza Strip
Gaza Civil Administration
Gaza City

Via Israel

Fax: +972-7-884 600

- expressing grave concern at the killing of Maher Na'im 'Umar al-Maja'idah;
- expressing grave concern about the wounding of Riyad Jami' as he tried to help Maher;
- asking to be informed of the results of the investigation into Maher al-Maja'idah's death, as well as be given detailed information about the procedures used to carry out the investigation;
- calling for a thorough, independent investigation to be carried out into the wounding of Riyad Jami', the methods and results of which should be made public;
- urging that anyone found to have been responsible for abuses in these two cases to be brought to justice,
- urging the Israeli authorities to take urgent measures to stop unjustifiable killings of civilians, including by reviewing the guidelines on opening fire, and making it clear to Israeli forces that abuses will not be tolerated;

Copies of your appeals can be sent to:

Judge Yosef Harish
Attorney General
PO Box 1087
Jerusalem
Israel

and to diplomatic representatives of Israel in your country.

Fares Muhammad Rasmi al-Kurdi

On 16 May 1993 in the mid-afternoon, twenty-month-old Fares al-Kurdi was walking with his father Muhammad in Jabalia Refugee Camp in the northern Gaza Strip where he lived. The situation in the whole strip was very tense, with about 20 Palestinians having been killed by Israeli forces in the previous fortnight.

A group of soldiers is said to have arrived in the camp and arrested a youth. Some other youths then began throwing stones at the soldiers from behind a large rubbish bin. Muhammad al-Kurdi says he took his son Fares by the hand and went into a nearby tyre-repair shop for protection, standing about one-and-a-half metres inside. One of the soldiers, apparently about 30 metres away, is said to have turned around, aimed quickly and fired without warning. A bullet hit the right side of Fares al-Kurdi's chest and he died almost immediately.

Muhammad al-Kurdi says that he was summoned to the Civil Administration shortly afterward to recount what happened, and that an army commander came to him to apologise.

Please send appeals to :

Mr Yitzhak Rabin
Prime Minister and Minister of Defence
Office of the Prime Minister
3 Kaplan Street
Hakiryia
Jerusalem 91919
Israel

Fax: +972-2-664 838

Brigadier-General Ilan Shiff
Judge Advocate General
6 David Elazar Street
Hakiryia
Tel Aviv
Israel

Fax: +972-3-588 6504

Col Yom-Tov Samiah
Commander of the Gaza Strip
Gaza Civil Administration
Gaza City
Via Israel

Fax: +972-7-884 500

-expressing grave concern at the killing of Fares Muhammad Rasmi al-Kurdi;

-asking to be informed of the results of the investigation into his death and to be provided with detailed information about the procedures used to carry out the investigation;

-urging that anyone found to have been responsible for abuses in connection with the killing of Fares al-Kurdi be brought to justice;

-urging the Israeli authorities to take urgent measures to stop unjustifiable killings of civilians, including by reviewing the guidelines on opening fire, and making it clear to Israeli forces that abuses will not be tolerated.

Copies of your appeals may be sent to:

**Judge Yosef Harish
Advocate General
PO Box 1087
Jerusalem
Israel**

and to diplomatic representatives of Israel in your country.

