

AI INDEX: MDE 15/65/96

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -- 27 SEPTEMBER 1996

ISRAEL/PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS FOR CIVILIANS TO BE PROTECTED

In the wake of the escalation of violence and loss of life in the West Bank and Gaza between Palestinians and Israelis, Amnesty International is demanding that all members of the security forces abide by international human rights standards and protect the lives of civilians who do not threaten the lives of others.

“For far too long, the world has tried to ignore the evidence of human rights abuses in the area in its search for peace,” said Secretary General Pierre Sané, who is on an Amnesty International visit to Turkey.

“This tragic situation clearly demonstrates that peace can only be built by real respect for human rights and that particularly in time of armed conflict human rights must not be postponed or neglected.”

Since 25 September, more than 60 people, including at least 50 Palestinians and 11 Israelis, have been killed and more than 300 wounded in clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces in Gaza and the West Bank. The clashes have involved peaceful as well as stone-throwing Palestinian demonstrators; security forces on both sides have used live ammunition and the Israeli forces have used helicopter gunships.

The right to life and physical integrity is a basic and fundamental right. According to the United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials “*The intentional lethal use of firearms may only be made when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life*”.

ENDS