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Israel/Occupied Territories: Amnesty International calls for deployment of human rights observers

In a letter sent today to United Nations Security Council members, Amnesty International called for the deployment of human rights observers in the Occupied Territories, including areas under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority, as a response to the continued grave human rights situation.

"Various measures have been proposed by United Nations bodies, as well as the United States, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), to end the violence and human rights abuses that have taken place in Israel and the Occupied Territories since the end of September 2000. What is still needed is an independent and impartial mechanism on the ground capable of monitoring respect for human rights by all sides on a long term basis," Amnesty International said.

Amnesty International stressed that without respect for human rights there would be no durable peace and security in the region.

"The presence of a body of human rights observers, who are entirely independent and impartial, could help restore calm and foster improved respect for human rights," the human rights organization said.

In its letter, Amnesty International emphasized that the international community must ensure that human rights observers would have full freedom of movement and free access to persons and places in all areas of the Occupied Territories to monitor alleged human rights abuses. There should be regular, frequent and public reporting by human rights observers.

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