

PUBLIC

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EXTRA 26/02

Fear for Safety

8 April 2002

ISRAEL/OCCUPIED TERRITORIES Palestinians in Jenin Refugee Camp

The Israeli armed forces have reportedly killed scores of Palestinian civilians, and injured hundreds more, in a sustained assault on the Palestinian refugee camp in Jenin on the West Bank. Many more will die unless the Israeli forces stop the attack and withdraw immediately.

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) have been attacking the Palestinian refugee camp since 3 April. Since yesterday they have been intensifying their attacks using tanks, F16 fighter jets and Apache helicopters armed with Hellfire missiles, in a clearly disproportionate use of lethal force. Many of those who died bled to death because ambulances were unable to reach them, because the IDF have closed off areas, imposed restrictions on movement and frequently shot at ambulances and medical workers. Dozens of houses have been destroyed either to allow wider passage for tanks through narrow streets or because armed Palestinians were allegedly sheltering in them. Eyewitnesses, including an Israeli journalist accompanying the IDF, have described occupants of houses being buried under the rubble.

Refugee camps, where Palestinian exiles have lived since 1948, are very densely populated. The use of tanks and missiles against Palestinians, armed and unarmed, in the camp, is creating very high casualties. The refugee camp has now been under siege for five days, and food and water are running out. This is already leading to a further humanitarian disaster.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- expressing concern that the IDF are clearly using excessive force in their attack on Jenin Refugee camp, and calling on the Israeli authorities to investigate the killings in the camps and bring those responsible for unlawful killings to justice;
- calling on the Israeli authorities to end and prevent unlawful killings by ensuring strict compliance with international standards on the use of force and firearms;
- expressing concern that collective punishment is being inflicted on Palestinians in Jenin refugee camp and throughout the West Bank, and calling on the Israeli government to abide by its obligations under international law;
- urging the Israeli authorities to agree to the introduction of international observers with a strong, public and transparent mandate to monitor respect for international humanitarian law and human rights.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon
Office of the Prime Minister
3 Kaplan Street, PO Box 187
Kiryat Ben-Gurion
Jerusalem 91919, Israel

Telegrams: Prime Minister, Jerusalem

Fax: + 972 2 651 2631

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Lieutenant-General Shaul Mufaz
Chief of General Staff
c/o Ministry of Defence
7 'A' Street, Hakiryia
Tel Aviv, Israel

Telegrams: Chief of General Staff, Jerusalem

Fax: + 972 3 691 6940

Salutation: Dear Lieutenant-General

Benjamin Ben-Eliezer

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Minister of Defence
Ministry of Defence
Kaplan Street, Hakirya
Tel Aviv 67659, Israel
Telegrams: Minister of Defence, Jerusalem
Fax: + 972 3 691 6940
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Israel accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.