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Israel/Occupied Territories : One year after the intifada- The International community must fulfil its obligations

One year after the intifada began on 29 September 2000 Amnesty International called on the international community to take steps to end the human rights tragedy in Israel and the Occupied Territories.

"Over the past year there have been numerous investigations, by the United Nations, by the Mitchell Commission, by international and local human rights organizations. There is a remarkable consensus in the conclusions and recommendations of all these reports," said Amnesty International. "What is lacking is the will to implement them."

More than 570 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli security services, the vast majority unlawfully when the lives of others were not in danger. More than 150 Israelis have been killed by Palestinian armed groups or individuals including 115 civilians - whose killing is prohibited under international humanitarian law.

Children are a high proportion of those killed: more than 150 Palestinian children and 30 Israeli children have been killed. Those maimed and wounded number more than 15,000. "The lives which have been already taken away will never be restored; the deaths of so many are compounded by the shattered lives of the disabled, traumatised and those who have lost loved ones," said Amnesty International.

The Occupied Territories have become a land of barriers between town and town and between village and village. The great majority of the inhabitants of Gaza have been enclosed for years as though in a

prison and Palestinians from the Occupied Territories are unable to enter Jerusalem without a permit.

"By denying a whole population the right to move, the Israeli authorities are not stopping the suicide bombers who can pass on foot. They are producing a population who are punished, who live under permanent siege and can see no future, no prospect of economic security, no meaning in education, no reason to stay alive."

The closures are a grave human rights violation and a collective punishment targeted against all Palestinians in the Occupied Territories for killings committed by a few.

In addition, more than 500 Palestinian homes have been demolished, for alleged "security" reasons or, in a discriminatory policy biased against Palestinians, because they lack planning permission. Israeli security services have arrested more than 1,500 Palestinians in Israel and the Occupied Territories since the *intifada*; there are reports of Palestinians kept for more than 40 days - and often for more than 20 days - in incommunicado detention without access to lawyers and methods of torture or other ill-treatment banned by a 1999 Supreme Court judgment are being frequently reported.

Palestinians are increasingly impoverished by the closures, traumatised by the killings and destruction; movement is dangerous and few feel that there can be any future, few look beyond the next week -the next day- the possibility of simply keeping alive.

Israelis, killed arbitrarily on roads in the Occupied Territories and by suicide bombs in towns in Israel also face fear, injury and trauma in their daily lives. "Yet the killings and other human rights violations should stop. The recommendations in every report, every commission of inquiry, have been similar", said Amnesty International.

Amnesty International has made many calls for the Palestinian Authority and armed groups to act in accordance with humanitarian law.

But the organization emphasised that “Israel has ratified and is a state party to the international human rights standards which, if implemented, would give a new life for the people of the region. A State is not allowed to wait for armed groups to stop violence; it has an obligation to act in accordance with its solemn promises.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of these recommendations are included not only in Amnesty International’s reports but also in the Mitchell Report, the United Nations Commission of Inquiry, and many other reports:

1. End Arbitrary Killings

- To Israel:

Lethal use of firearms should be ended except when strictly unavoidable to protect life;

extrajudicial executions must be prohibited; that reckless and random shooting at residential areas should stop; and to restore the value of human life every killing must be investigated, and perpetrators of unlawful killings brought to justice.

- To the Palestinian Authority:

Effective action should be taken to prohibit anyone under the PA authority from killing civilians; extrajudicial executions must be prohibited; to ensure respect for human life every killing of Palestinians or Israelis must be fully investigated and perpetrators of unlawful killings brought to justice.

- **To armed groups:** armed groups must respect fundamental principles of humanitarian law which prohibit the killing of civilians. Random shooting at residential areas must stop.

2. End Closures

- **To Israel:**

Barriers to free movement of Palestinians within the Occupied Territories, including East Jerusalem, should be removed.

3. Halt House Demolitions

- **To Israel:**

Israel should cease to carry out demolitions of houses as punishment or in reprisals. Outstanding demolition orders based on discriminatory policies should be cancelled and discriminatory policies ended.

4. Safeguard Detainees

- **To Israel:** Israel should ensure that all those arrested have their rights including prompt access to lawyers and family; the use of torture or other ill-treatment under interrogation must be ended; administrative detainees should be released unless they receive fair trial on criminal charges. Children should not be detained except as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate time.

- To the Palestinian Authority: PA security services should end arbitrary arrests and the use of torture; all those arrested on political charges, including on charges of "collaboration," should be immediately released unless they receive fair trial on recognizably criminal charges before ordinary courts.

5. Restore International Standards

Amnesty International calls on the Israeli Government to implement in its policy the international human rights standards which the Israeli State has ratified.

The organization calls on the Palestinian Authority which has stated that it will abide by internationally recognized standards, to do so.

The organization calls on all Palestinian and Israeli armed groups to respect the fundamental principals contained in the Fourth Geneva Convention.

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