

PCHR

Palestinian Centre for Human Rights
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Weekly Report: On Israeli Human Rights
 Violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

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Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) Escalate Attacks on Palestinian Civilians and Property in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) and Launch an Unprecedented Media Campaign in the Gaza Strip

- **41 Palestinians, 23 of whom are civilians, including 9 children, 3 women and two disabled persons, were killed by IOF in the Gaza Strip.**
- **9 of these civilians from 3 families were killed in 3 separate attacks.**
- **151 Palestinians, mostly civilians, including 24 children, two women, two journalists and two paramedics, were wounded by the IOF gunfire.**
- **IOF launched a series of air strikes on a number of houses in the Gaza Strip.**
- **6 houses were destroyed and dozens of others were severely damaged.**
- **IOF threatened and warned Palestinian civilians by phone to destroy their houses if they helped Palestinian resistance activists.**
- **IOF conducted 28 incursions into Palestinian communities in the West Bank, and invaded al-Shojaeya neighborhood in Gaza City.**
- **IOF razed 207 donums^[1] of agricultural land in al-Maghazi refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip.**
- **IOF razed areas of land in al-Shojaeya neighborhood in Gaza City.**

- **IOF destroyed a house in Kufor Qaddoum village near Qalqilya.**
- **IOF arrested 78 Palestinian civilians in the West Bank.**
- **IOF destroyed the governmental compounds in Nablus.**
- **IOF have continued to impose a total siege on the OPT; IOF have imposed a tightened siege on the Gaza Strip; Rafah International Crossing Point on the Egyptian border has been closed; IOF positioned at various checkpoints in the West Bank arrested two Palestinian civilians.**
- **IOF have continued to construct the Annexation Wall in the West Bank.**
- **Israeli settlers have continued attacks Palestinian civilians and property in the OPT; two Palestinian civilians were wounded.**

Summary

As the international community has remained silent, IOF have continued to wage a full scale offensive on the Palestinian people, especially in the Gaza Strip. During the reported period, IOF have waged a media war against Palestinian civilians. They have dropped leaflets in streets and on roofs of houses, phoned civilians threatening to destroy their houses if they helped Palestinian resistance activist, and ordered a number of Palestinian resistance activists through phone calls on their mobile phones to evacuate their houses, which would be destroyed. IOF have further continued to attack journalists in an attempt to prevent them from reporting on Israeli practices in the OPT. They have also penetrated the broadcasting waves of a number of local radio, and broadcast warnings and threats to Palestinian civilians. Israel seeks to legitimize collective punishment against Palestinian civilians by claiming in its media that it does not target unarmed civilians and that it warns them before attacking any building belonging to them or located near them.

PCHR, monitoring with utmost concern the developments of this offensive, calls upon the international community, particularly the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and United Nations, to immediately intervene to force IOF to stop this offensive and allow the passage of foodstuffs, medical supplies and fuels into the Gaza Strip. PCHR warns the international community of the policies of collective punishment and reprisals practiced by IOF against the Palestinian civilian population, especially the destruction of electricity sources and the denial of passage of foodstuffs and fuels into the Gaza Strip, which will lead to a humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. Attacks in the OPT are not merely violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention, rather they constitute a war waged by Israel against Palestinian civilians. This war has included the destruction of the civilian infrastructure, including an electricity generation plant and a number of bridges, and imposing a strict siege on the Gaza Strip – all border crossings have been closed the movement of persons and goods to and from the Gaza Strip has been prohibited. This war waged by Israel is a war against civilians, in disregard for international humanitarian law. Israel has been encouraged by the US support and the European silence to launch more attacks against Palestinian civilians and then against Lebanon.

The outcome of crimes committed by IOF since 25 June 2006:

- 157 Palestinians, mostly civilians, including 33 children and 8 women, have been killed by IOF.
- At least 700 Palestinian civilians, including 158 children and 21 women, have been wounded by the IOF gunfire.
- At least 170 air-to-surface missiles and hundreds of artillery shells have been fired at Palestinian civilian and military targets in the Gaza Strip.
- Buildings of the Palestinian Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of National economy, the office of the Palestinian Prime Minister and a number of educational institutions have been destroyed.
- The electricity generation plant, providing 45% of the electricity of the Gaza Strip, was destroyed, and electricity networks and transmitters have been repeatedly attacked.
- 6 bridges linking Gaza City with the central Gaza Strip and a number of roads have been destroyed.
- Hundreds of donums of agricultural land and dozens of houses have been destroyed.
- Hundreds of Palestinian civilians, including 8 ministers and 26 members of the Palestinian Legislative Council have been arrested.
- The Palestinian governmental compound in Nablus has been destroyed.
- Many families in Rafah, Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahia have been forced to leave their houses.

- IOF intelligence have warned some Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip by phone to evacuate their houses, which would be attacked.

Israeli violations of international law continued in the OPT during the reported period (20-26 July 2006):

Killing: During the reported period, IOF killed 38 Palestinians, including 21 civilians, in the Gaza Strip. The victims included a mentally disabled person, 8 children and 3 women. In addition, a child, a dumb person and a resistance activist died from previous wounds. Nine of the victims are from 3 families and were killed in 3 separate attacks: a woman, her two children and their uncle were killed in al-Shojaeya neighborhood in Gaza City on 21 July 2006, when IOF shelled their house; an old woman and her grandchild were killed in Beit Lahia on 24 July 2006, when an IOF aircraft fired a missile at their animal cart; and a woman and her two children were killed in Jabalya on 26 July 2006, when IOF shelled their house. Four Palestinian civilians, including a child, were killed, when IOF shelled al-Nada tower buildings, west of Beit Hanoun. A child was also killed, when IOF shelled al-Qarara village, east of Khan Yunis. Another child was killed in al-Maghazi refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. IOF have moved into al-Shojaeya neighborhood in Gaza City, killing 17 Palestinians.

In addition, 146 Palestinians, mostly civilians, including 33 children, two women, two paramedics and two journalists, were wounded by IOF gunfire. Thus, the number of Palestinians killed by IOF since the beginning of "Operation Summer Rains" on 25 June 2006 has increased to 149, including 77 civilians. These civilians have included 32 children and 8 women. In addition, 626 others, mostly civilians, including 163 children, 21 women, 4 paramedics and 4 journalists, have been wounded.

IOF also launched at least 30 air strikes on a number of targets in the Gaza Strip, including 5 houses belonging to Palestinian resistance activists. These houses were destroyed, and a number of neighboring houses and civilian facilities were severely damaged. IOF intelligence officers ordered owners of these houses by phone to evacuate their houses. The targeted houses were not located in confrontation areas, or in areas used to fire rockets. They were distributed in different parts of the Gaza Strip. In addition, they were multi-story apartment structures. The destruction caused fear among the civilian population. These bombardments are a flagrant violation of article 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prescribes that "it is prohibited for the occupying power to destroy private property of individuals, groups, state, public authority, or social and cooperative organizations except if military operations deem it an unavoidable necessity." The legal interpretation of this article sets the following criteria for targeting a civilian installation:

- The destruction during military operations;
- The installation poses a direct danger to soldiers of the occupying power; and
- Destruction is the only remaining option to avoid the security threat.

These criteria do not fit the cases in which IOF bombed civilian houses.

In a further escalation, IOF fired dozens of artillery shells at al-Nada tower buildings, west of Beit Hanoun. A number of Palestinian civilians were killed or wounded and a number of flats were damaged. Residents of the building were forced to leave their flats due to the IOF shelling. It is worth noting that the number of towers buildings in the area is 26, each of which consists of 18 flats. At least 2300 Palestinians (468) families live in these buildings.

In the West Bank, a Palestinian civilian was killed by shrapnel when IOF destroyed the Palestinian governmental compound in Nablus. In addition, 5 civilians, including two children, were wounded by the Israeli gunfire.

Incursions: During the reported period, IOF reoccupied some areas in the Gaza Strip. The

widest of such operations was in al-Shojaeya neighborhood in Gaza City, which started on 26 July 2006. On 21 July 2006, IOF withdrew from al-Maghazi refugee camp, following a two-day incursion into the camp. During this incursion, IOF killed 17 Palestinians and wounded 125 others. They also destroyed 207 donums of land, 13 houses and the civilian infrastructure of the camp.

In the West Bank, IOF conducted at least 28 military incursions into Palestinian communities, during which they raided dozens of houses, buildings and civil institutions. IOF raided houses and arrested 78 Palestinian civilians, including 14 children and 5 brothers.

On Friday evening, 21, July 2006, IOF withdrew from Nablus following a 3-day incursion into the city. During this incursion, IOF killed 5 Palestinians, including two civilians, and wounded 68 civilians, including 27 children and 3 journalists. They also destroyed the Palestinian governmental compound in the city.

Restrictions on Movement: IOF have continued to impose a tightened siege on the OPT and imposed severe restrictions on the movement of Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including Occupied East Jerusalem.

Gaza Strip

Following an attack launched by Palestinian militants on 25 June 2006 near the Israeli-Egyptian border, southeast of Rafah, which left two IOF soldiers and two of the attackers dead and a third IOF soldier missing, IOF have closed all border crossings of the Gaza Strip:

IOF have closed Rafah International Crossing Point, even though they do not directly control it. They have prevented European observers working at the crossing point from reaching it. PCHR has always warned following the agreement reached between the Palestinian and Israeli sides, which was brokered by the United States and the European Union, that IOF have complete, even though indirect, control over the crossing point. On 18 and 19 July 2006, IOF permitted reopening the crossing point partially, with the presence of EU observers and in agreement with the Egyptian side, for travelers wishing to come back to the Gaza Strip. IOF have closed commercial crossings of the Gaza Strip, especially al-Mentar (Karni) crossing. As a consequence, the economic situation inside the Gaza Strip has further deteriorated and many goods have been lacked in markets. IOF have also continued to close Erez crossing in the northern Gaza Strip. In addition, IOF have prevented Palestinian fishermen from fishing.

IOF have tightened the siege imposed on Palestinian communities in the West Bank since Thursday morning, 20 July 2006. They have cancelled permits offered to Palestinians from the West Bank to enter Jerusalem. IOF positioned at various checkpoints in the West Bank have continued to impose severe restrictions on the movement of Palestinian civilians. IOF have continued to separate between the north and south of the West Bank. During the reported period, IOF positioned at various checkpoints around imposed severe restrictions on the movement of Palestinian civilians. During the reported period, IOF at checkpoints in the West Bank arrested two Palestinian civilians, and violently beat a third one. On 26 July 2006, a Palestinian patient at an IOF checkpoint near Qalqilya, as IOF prevented his evacuation to the hospital to be treated from an acute heart attack.

Annexation Wall: IOF have continued to construct the Annexation Wall inside the West Bank. During the reported period, IOF razed areas of Palestinian land in al-Sawhra al-Gharbiya village, east of occupied Jerusalem, to complete the construction of a section of the Wall in the area. IOF also razed dozens of donums of agricultural land in Jourat al-Shama'a village, south of Bethlehem, to construct a section of the Wall to the southeast of "Efrat" settlement.

Illegal Settler Activities: Israeli settlers in breach of international humanitarian law continue to reside in the OPT and have launched a series of attacks against Palestinian civilians and property. During the reported period, two Palestinian civilians were wounded when settlers fired at them in two separate attacks in Housan village, west of Bethlehem, and al-Zahiriya village, south of Hebron. IOF also burnt trees in Abu Ghunaim Forest to expand “Har Homa” settlement, south of Jerusalem.

The full report is available online at:

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http://www.pchrgaza.org/files/W_report/English/2006/27-07-2006.htm

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[1]1 donum is equal to 1000 square meters.