

Context and collective punishment: A briefing note to journalists in the aftermath of the killings of citizens in the Palestine-Israel region

Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign – 03/07/2014

The IPSC deplores the brutal murder of the three young Israeli citizens whose remains were found on Monday near Hebron and the apparent ‘revenge’ murder of a Palestinian teenager reportedly carried out by Israeli extremists early Wednesday. Equally the IPSC deplores the deaths of all civilians killed in this conflict of unequals, including the six civilians killed by Israeli occupation forces since the Israeli teenagers were kidnapped.

The IPSC is concerned that the unjustifiable killings of the three Israelis will be used to justify further killings, destruction and illegal settlement building in the occupied Palestinian territories (OPT) by the Israeli government and military. We also understand that these killings must be seen in the wider context of the ongoing brutality of Israel’s military occupation which has left 6 children and 26 adults dead in 2014 alone. It is worth noting that the two children whose unprovoked shootings by the Israeli military on May 15th were [caught on CCTV](#) received scant media coverage in this country.

We believe, therefore, that the challenge for conscientious journalists in the aftermath of these horrific events should be to report events from the region in a balanced and informed manner; a manner which is closed to both political manipulation and raw emotion. Hoping therefore to inform and bring balance to reporting, the IPSC proffers this document as an aid to journalists.

Furthermore, the IPSC has numerous contacts in human rights organisations on the ground in Palestine and is more than happy to arrange interviews with these organisations for journalists.

Background Briefing Note on the Recent Violence in the Palestine-Israel region

The three Israeli teenagers Eyal Yifrah, Gilad Shaar and Naftali Fraenkel disappeared from outside an Israeli settlement on June 12, and their remains were found nearby nineteen days later. In the ostensible search for these youths, Israeli occupation forces have rampaged throughout the West Bank and Gaza in a massive display of illegal collective punishment where they have:

- Killed at least 6 Palestinian civilians, including one 14-year-old child and mentally ill man on his way to morning prayers. Three members of armed Palestinian groups in Gaza were also extra-judicially assassinated in violation of international law;
- Contributed to the death of two elderly Palestinian who suffered fatal heart attacks during night raids. A 12th Palestinian, a 17-year-old shepherd boy also died after stepping on a landmine in the Jordan Valley. It is not yet known who laid the mine;
- In addition, a 16-year-old Palestinian child was abducted from East Jerusalem and killed by Israeli extremists. (See table below for the names and details of these fatalities);

Date	Name	Age	Area	Manner of death
16/06/2014	Ahmad Sabarin	20	al-Jalazun refugee camp (Ramallah)	Shot dead by military
21/06/2014	Mahmoud Jihad Muhammad	14	Dura village (near Hebron)	Shot dead by military

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20/06/2014 (shot) 25/06/2014 (died)	Mustafa Hosni Aslan	22	Qalandiya refugee camp	Shot, died of wounds five days later
21/06/2014	Jamil Ali Abed Jabir	60s	Haris (Salfit)	Suffered heart attack during military raid, was denied medical attention
23/06/2014	Sakher Dorgham Zaamel Abu al- Hasan	17	al-Maleh (Jordan Valley)	Stepped on a landmine, unclear who planted mine
22/06/2014	Ahmad Said Suod Khalid	27	al-Ein refugee camp (Nablus)	Shot dead by military while trying to walk to mosque, suffered from mental illness
22/06/2014	Mahmoud Ismail Atallah Tarifi	30	Ramallah	Shot dead by military
27/06/2014	Fatima Ismail Issa Rushdi,	78	el-Arrub (Hebron)	Heart attack during military raid
27/06/2014	Muhammad al-Fasih	24	al-Shati refugee camp (Gaza City)	Extra-judicially executed in airstrike
27/06/2014	Usama al-Hassumi	29	al-Shati refugee camp (Gaza City)	Extra-judicially executed in airstrike
30/06/2014	Mohammad Ziad Abu Rezeq	22	al-Qarara (Khan Younis)	Extra-judicially executed in airstrike
01/07/2014	Yousef Ibrahim Ahmed Ibn Gharra "Abu Zagha"	20	Jenin refugee camp	Shot dead by military
02/07/2014	Muhammad Hussein Abu Khdeir	16	Shufat (East Jerusalem)	Abducted, stabbed and burned by suspected Israeli extremists in apparent 'revenge' attack

- Wounded at least 90 others, including 16 children and three journalists;
- Conducted over 160 military incursions into Palestinian towns, villages and refugee camps, where hundreds of civilian homes have been invaded and raided;
- Arrested between 440 and [560 Palestinians](#), including at least 10 children, bringing the total number of Palestinians in Israeli prisons to between 5710 and 5830, while the number of children in detention has [surpassed 250](#). There are also [20 members](#) of the Palestinian parliament now imprisoned, including the Speaker;
- Conducted circa 100 airstrikes, shellings or other attacks in Gaza which have caused injuries to civilians. Targets of these strikes have included greenhouses, an UNRWA health clinic, blacksmith workshop and turnery, a concrete factory and agricultural lands;
- Illegal Israeli settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem have carried out at least 15 attacks on Palestinian people and property, including firing live ammunition at Palestinian

[quarry workers](#), firing upon a [funeral](#), firing upon a [car](#), attacking [Palestinian homes](#), vandalising [vehicles](#), chopping down [olive trees](#) and setting fire to a [farm](#).

- On 19th June the Israeli government [approved a further 172](#) illegal settlement dwellings in East Jerusalem. On 1st July the [cornerstone was laid](#) for the new Kochav Jacob illegal settlement near Ramallah by the Knesset Chairperson Yuli Edelstein. Israeli PM Netanyahu has [called](#) for “a wave of settlement construction and the establishment of a new settlement in memory” of the teenagers. **All Israeli settlements are illegal under international law and are considered war crimes under the [Fourth Geneva Convention](#).**
- In this regard, Amnesty International [states that](#) Israel has imposed “measures that clearly constitute collective punishment on Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories”, that “collective punishment cannot be justified for any reason whatsoever, including violations by another party” and that “collective punishment of civilians is prohibited by the Fourth Geneva Convention as well as customary international humanitarian law”.

This is only a very limited survey of the events of a two-and-half week period in Israeli-occupied Palestine, however, it is regrettable that little if any of this has been reported in Irish media outlets.

Context is always crucial

It must be noted these acts of violence are occurring within the context of an enduring, unjustifiable and colonial military occupation, that Gaza remains under an illegal and cruel siege and that Israel has chosen to expand its illegal settlement activities at the expense of a negotiated peace.

Since the outbreak of the second intifada in September 2000, over 6,800 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli occupation forces or illegal settlers. Of those, the vast majority were civilians. According to Defence for Children International, over 1,400 of the fatalities were children, giving an appalling average of one Palestinian child killed by Israeli forces every 3.5 days, or once every 84 hours, over the past 14 years. DCI figures also show that at any given time, Israel holds between 200 and 300 Palestinian children in prison. Various [reports](#), including by [UNICEF](#), [Save the Children](#) and a British government-funded legal [fact-finding mission](#), have attested to the cruel and inhumane treatment faced by child prisoners from arrest to incarceration to the effects on them following their release.

The IPSC therefore appeals to journalists and media outlets to recognise and report on this *vital context* and to reflect the political, military and humanitarian reality on the ground, and to thereby ensure that the lives and rights of all people in Israel and Palestine are afforded the dignity and importance that they are entitled to. That the outrage expressed at one group of murders is not balanced by indifference to the more prevalent, consistent and officially condoned murders that Palestinians daily experience.

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Note on sources: The statistics given above are drawn from various sources, including the [Palestinian Center for Human Rights](#), [B'Tselem - The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories](#), [Amnesty International - Ireland](#), [Defence For Children International – Palestine](#), [Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association](#) and various news agencies.

Contact: The IPSC are available for comment or to assist in arranging interviews at 01 8727798 or via email at info@ipsc.ie