



הארגון הבינלאומי של עורכי-דין ומשפטנים יהודים (ע"ר)
THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH LAWYERS AND JURISTS (R.A.)

*****URGENT*****

November 18, 2012

H.E. Navanethem Pillay
Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations

H.E. Laura Dupuy Lasserre
President of the Human Rights Council
United Nations

Urgent: Ongoing Deliberate Attacks on Israeli Civilians

The International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists is a Category II NGO at the UN, dedicated to advancing human rights everywhere, including the prevention of war crimes, the punishment of war criminals, the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction and international cooperation based on the rule of law and the fair implementation of international covenants and conventions.

Over the last several days, Hamas and other armed groups in the Gaza Strip have fired over 850 rockets and mortar shells into Israel. Numerous Israeli cities, including Tel Aviv, other towns and agricultural communities in Israel have been targeted.

As a result, people have been killed and injured, homes destroyed and some five million Israelis – men, women, children and the elderly are being traumatized by these attacks.

At the time of writing, the attacks are ongoing and show no signs of abating.

The situation is intolerable. No country can be expected to sit idly by while its citizens are the victims of indiscriminate attacks. While Israel has gone to great lengths to protect her population from attack, including the deployment of a new rocket interception system, warning systems, bomb shelters and other protective measures – these have not been sufficient to prevent damage to life, limb and property as well as the emotional trauma of millions living under threat.

So far, the Israeli military has responded with pinpoint airstrikes against terrorist operatives and the rocket-launching infrastructure in Gaza, yet there is a very real danger of further escalation, including a major ground operation if the attacks from Gaza continue.

The deliberate targeting of civilians is a grave violation of international norms and a gross infringement of the human rights of the victims.

Furthermore, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other terrorist groups are launching their attacks out of densely populated civilian areas, abusing the protections given to civilians and civilian objects under International Humanitarian Law and effectively using the civilian population

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in Gaza as human shields. This has included the use of hospitals, places of worship and theaters for military purposes. All of the above are clear violations of international law as well as elementary standards of humanity.

Regrettably, to date, neither the OHCHR nor the Human Rights Council have seen fit to condemn the outrageous behavior of Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other terrorist groups operating out of the Gaza Strip. One can only surmise, but if the UN Human Rights custodians had made clear to these terrorist groups at the outset that their conduct was unlawful and unacceptable, perhaps the current conflagration could have been averted.

Nevertheless, late action is better than no action at all. We therefore call upon the OHCHR and the Human Rights Council to immediately issue clear and unequivocal condemnations of these attacks and the use of civilians as human shields and to take concerted action to put an end to the violations and hold the perpetrators accountable. **In this state of affairs to be silent is to be an accomplice to the crime.**

Sincerely,

Irit Kohn, President
IAJLJ