

**ISRAELI VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW IN GAZA****FACT SHEET****JULY 2006**

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*Israel continues to violate international law in Gaza with near total impunity. In spite of its redeployment of forces and evacuation of settlers from Gaza almost a year ago, Israel continues to effectively control Gaza, frustrating the Palestinian Authority's ability to govern it and contributing to a humanitarian crisis. In a concerted display of its military control, Israel recently launched yet another indiscriminate and disproportionate offensive against Gaza, committing grave breaches against its population. As occupying power, Israel must be held accountable.*

- ***Since the beginning of June, Israel has killed 97 Palestinian civilians in Gaza alone.***
  - Reprisals against civilians and indiscriminate attacks on civilians, including attacks that may cause injury to civilians in excess of the anticipated military advantage, are illegal.
  
- ***Within that same period, Israel extra-judicially assassinated 8 Palestinians in Gaza.***
  - Attacks against individuals *hors de combat* are illegal.
  - A civilian who has taken a direct part in hostilities may only be arrested and prosecuted. Extra-judicial assassinations violate fundamental guarantees of due process.
  
- ***The Israeli army destroyed the substation of the only power plant in Gaza, which provides electricity to 50 per cent of the population, denying over half a million Palestinians electricity.***
  - Unnecessary destruction of civilian property is illegal, as is collective punishment.
  - The absence of sufficient electricity has impacted all aspects of daily life, from the carrying out of routine tasks to the running of institutions providing services to the public, such as hospitals.
  - The absence of electricity has also caused shortages of water due to the lack of electricity to pump wells.
  - The power plant is Gaza's only domestic source of electricity.
  - It will take months and millions of dollars to repair the power plant.
  
- ***The Israeli army destroyed and damaged three bridges, dividing Gaza into three isolated units, as well as government institutions and a university.***
  - The destruction of civilian property that is not absolutely necessitated by military operations is illegal. None of this destruction was absolutely necessary for military operations.
  
- ***Israeli F-16 combat aircraft have repeatedly broken the sound barrier, breaking the windows of civilian houses and causing massive psychological damage to the civilian population, half of which is under 15 years of age.***
  - This, along with the destruction of Palestinian civilian infrastructure, constitutes collective punishment of the civilian population in Gaza.

- ***Israel's recent military activities have caused hundreds of Palestinians to remain stranded on the Egyptian side of the Gaza-Egypt border. Eight Palestinians died while waiting there.***
  - This too constitutes collective punishment.
- ***Since late last year, the Israeli army has enforced a free fire zone in a 9.5 km<sup>2</sup> strip of northern Gaza, threatening to fire upon anyone found within the area.***
  - The blanket imposition of a firing zone does not discriminate between combatants and civilians or between military and civilian objects, and is therefore illegal.
  - Shooting or otherwise attacking with potentially lethal force an individual who enters a closed zone is a disproportionate response to an entry into the zone.
- ***During its most recent military activities, the Israeli army caused the forced displacement of 20,000 Gazans from Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahia without providing any of the protections required by the Fourth Geneva Convention.***
  - This is not the first time Israel has forcibly displaced Palestinians in Gaza.
    - Late last year, Israel forcibly displaced some 250 residents of As-Siafa in northern Gaza without providing the required protections when it began imposing its free fire zone.
- ***Israel detained 27 Palestinian Legislative Council members and 6 other ministers.***
  - Like many others, these Palestinians were unlawfully detained on account of their political views and not for any legitimate security reason. Only months before, Israel permitted these same people to run in Palestinian elections, which raises serious doubts that they committed any kind of criminal offence.
- ***Israel has severely restricted the movement of people and goods in and out of Gaza even after its "disengagement", crippling the Gazan economy, and has withheld tax revenues belonging to the Palestinian Authority.***
  - Israel remains responsible for maintaining public order and civic life, including public services, for the Palestinian civilian population.