



11 August 2014

### **LPHR public statement on current military offensive on Gaza**

As lawyers committed to the protection and advancement of Palestinian human rights, we reiterate our call upon the international community to act decisively to halt the latest resort to sustained military action in the Gaza Strip, following Israel's announcement on 8 July 2014 that they have launched a military operation codenamed Operation Protective Edge. LPHR welcomes a new 72 hour long ceasefire which came into effect at midnight.

LPHR is gravely concerned by today's report from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) stating that as of 08:00 today, the total number of Palestinian civilian fatalities since the start of Operation Protective Edge is at least 1,395, including 458 children and 237 women. New estimates of the extent of destruction state that 16,700 houses have been destroyed or severely damaged, rendering over 100,000 homeless. 25 schools have been destroyed or severely damaged since the start of the conflict and the start of the new school year will be delayed.

LPHR strongly deplores that in the last 24 hour reporting period, 12 Palestinians have been killed as a result of Israeli air strikes, including three children and a woman, while another person died of injuries sustained previously. Among the most serious incidents includes at around 13:20pm, an Israeli missile hit a staff member of Al Mezan Center for Human Rights - Anwar Al Za'aneen - while he was reportedly talking with two water technicians from Beit Hanoun municipality, who were repairing a water network close to his house. All three were injured and Al Za'aneen died a few hours later in hospital. LPHR expresses our deepest condolences to our colleagues at Al Mezan. At around 10:30am, a 13-year old boy, Ahmad Al Masri, was hit and killed by an airstrike, reportedly on his way to a grocery store in Deir Al Balah.

LPHR reiterates its extremely serious concern that civilians and civilian objects are being indiscriminately and disproportionately targeted by Israeli military attacks in disregard for the protection of civilians. Our letter recently published in the Guardian highlights this grave concern with a specific focus on the legality of Israel's policy of directly targeting family homes.

LPHR further reiterates its urgent call upon the parties to military action, Israeli or Palestinian, to fulfil their binding legal obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law and immediately refrain from the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force against civilians or civilian objects.

LPHR further urgently calls upon the international community to ensure that credible investigations and full legal accountability is secured for all deaths and injuries caused by unlawful military actions.

LPHR shall continue to closely monitor the current military offensive on Gaza and will make further public statements as and when necessary.