



2 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. The onset of an Israeli military ground offensive on 17 July 2014 has, as feared, exacerbated the enormous harm to the civilian population of Gaza.

LPHR is gravely concerned by today's report from the [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#) (OCHA) stating that as of 15:00 today, the total number of Palestinian civilian fatalities since the start of Operation Protective Edge is at least 1,033, including 329 children and 187 women. 259,000 Palestinian civilians have been forcibly displaced and are hosted in United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and government shelters. Together with those hosted by relatives and friends, it is estimated that altogether 475,000 people have been forcibly displaced.

LPHR strongly deplores that since yesterday's update, at least 86 persons have reportedly been killed and identified, the majority during bombardments in the Rafah area. The attack on the Rafah area saw the heaviest shelling and fighting recorded since the start of the conflict. Some reports indicate that the total number of fatalities in Rafah alone may include as many as 136 people, many of whom could not yet be retrieved from under the rubble or their identity established. Many of these casualties occurred yesterday in the morning hours, during the initial fighting and shelling, while they were in the streets, believing a ceasefire was in force. Other casualties fell during the targeting of homes.

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.

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. We fully endorse the [statement](#) made by UNRWA spokesperson, Chris Guinness, that 'Gaza is beyond the realm of humanitarian action alone, and has moved into the realm of accountability'.

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