



20 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 deeply regrets the resumption of hostilities yesterday evening after an eight day ceasefire.

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 1,434, including 467 children and 244 women. An estimated 1,000 of the 3,000 children who have been injured will suffer from a long-term disability and a further 6,000 children will have a parent with a life-long disability. Based on the total number of adults killed, there may be up to 1,500 children orphaned.

LPHR strongly deplores that in the last 24 hour reporting period, twenty-two fatalities have been recorded comprising 17 new deaths and five who succumbed to injuries sustained earlier. Eleven of these have been classified as civilians and the status of the others is unknown. Among the most serious incidents include an Israeli military air strike at 04:50am against a tin-roofed house belonging to Mustafa Mohammed al-Louh, in Deir al-Balah. The house and a neighbouring house belonging to owner's son were destroyed, and seven members of the family were killed: Ra'fat Mustafa al-Louh, 32; his wife Nabila 'Eid al-Louh, 28, pregnant in the 9th month; their three children: Mustafa, 10, Maisara, 8, and Farah, 6; Mohammed Mustafa al-Louh, 22; and Ahmed Mustafa al-Louh, 22.

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 published earlier this month 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.