



26 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 on 19 August 2014 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 1,460, including 493 children and 253 women. The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has risen to 475,000, more than a quarter of the population of Gaza.

LPHR strongly deplores that in the last 24 hour reporting period, at least 4 civilians, including two children and a woman have reportedly been killed. The reporting period saw the continuation of a new Israeli trend of bombing high-rise buildings. Overnight, the Israeli air force fired multiple missiles that completely levelled the 16-storey structure known as "Little Italy" in the Nasser neighbourhood of Gaza city. The building, which housed over 60 apartments and dozens of shops, was evacuated following warning calls. Another airstrike destroyed the 14-storey al-Basha building in the Rimal area of Gaza city. Although warning messages were also reportedly delivered in this incident, 15 people were injured.

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.