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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 yesterday that they have launched a military operation codenamed Operation Protective Edge.

LPHR is hugely concerned by reports from the Palestinian Center for Human Rights and Al Mezan Center for Human Rights of today stating that since midday yesterday, 17 Palestinian civilians, including six children and three women, have been killed following Israeli military airstrikes. Another 297 people have reportedly been injured, of whom 71 are children and 66 are women. The number of houses damaged is 268.

LPHR is particularly concerned at an issue highlighted by these human rights organisations of homes being deliberately targeted for military air strikes in the presence of civilians. Eight Palestinian civilians, including six children, were killed, and a further 28 civilians, including 19 children and a woman, were wounded, when gathered around a house demolished by a military air strike in the town of Khan Yunis. Six civilians, including three women, were killed when a missile struck a house belonging to Abdul Hafez Hamad, a leader of Islamic Jihad.

In light of this apparently unlawful use of force against civilian objects, LPHR urgently calls 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 ensure against the indiscriminate 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 be closely monitoring the current military offensive on Gaza and will make further public statements as and when necessary.