



25 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 1,454, including 491 children and 253 women. Nearly half a million children in Gaza were unable to return to primary and secondary schools yesterday, the scheduled start to the new academic year.

LPHR strongly deplores that in the last 72 hour reporting period, at least 26 civilians, including 14 children 6 women have reportedly been killed. Another approximately 25 Palestinians accused of collaborating with Israel have reportedly been killed in Gaza since 21 August 2014. At least 56 houses were totally destroyed in Israeli air strikes. The reporting period also saw the destruction of a number of entire multi-storey buildings. On 23 August 2014, the Israeli air force levelled the 13-storey building (Al-Zafer Tower 4), southwest of Gaza city, alleging that Hamas was running an operations centre from one of the floors. The 49-apartment tower had housed at least 40 families, all of whom are now displaced. Israeli forces provided a number of warnings, including small rockets and phone calls to some of the families living in the tower, ordering them to evacuate. At least 18 people from the neighbourhood were reportedly 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.