



Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP  
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs  
Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office  
London SW1A 2AH

CC: Foreign Office Minister, Rt Hon James Cleverly MP

19 May 2021

Dear Secretary of State Raab,

**Re: Urging the UK government to call for the immediate end of widespread attacks on homes in Gaza and to ensure accountability against those responsible**

As lawyers committed to the protection and advancement of Palestinian human rights, we call upon the UK government to urge the end of the apparent policy and pattern of targeted Israeli airstrikes on homes in the Gaza Strip causing large-scale civilian harm, and to support a genuine and thorough investigation into these alleged serious violations with a view to ensuring accountability against those responsible for its implementation.

LPHR is extremely concerned by the high number of people killed in Gaza during the current hostilities on Gaza, which began on 10 May 2021. As of midday on 18 May, [213 Palestinians, including 62 children and 35 women](#) (including three pregnant women) have been killed.

We are especially appalled to see a resumption of targeted military attacks against family homes resulting in civilian casualties, given the clear evidence of severe harm to civilians that attacks on homes cause. Widespread military attacks on family homes was a key feature of Israel's use of force on Gaza in 2014, during which 1,066 people, including 370 children, were killed inside their homes. The subsequent UN Commission of Inquiry fully examined the military targeting of family homes by Israel's forces, and found that serious violations of international humanitarian law and international criminal law may have been committed; including by “*decision-makers at the highest level of the Government of Israel*”. It conformed with LPHR’s thorough analysis that there is a very credible case that the widespread targeting of family homes in Gaza may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

As of [18 May, a reported 402 residential units](#) have been destroyed in Israeli attacks since 10 May 2021, in addition to 502 housing units severely damaged and rendered uninhabitable. As of midday on 18 May, at least 104 people, including 32 children, have been killed in residential buildings in Gaza. It is likely that this figure will rise as bodies are recovered from the rubble.

Reported military attacks on homes resulting in a large number of fatalities and injuries include:



- On [10 May 2021 at 18:10](#), a shell hit a house on Al-Masriyeen Street in the east of Beit Hanoun City, killing eight Palestinians, including six children, and injuring 18 others, including 10 children. The fatalities are: 2-year-old Yazan Sultan Atallah Almasri, 6-year-old Marwan Yousef Atallah Almasri, 10-year-old Rahaf Mohammed Atallah Almasri, 11-year-old Ibrahim Yousef Atallah Almasri, 11-year-old Hussein Moneer Hussein Hamad, 16-year-old Ibrahim Abdallah Mohammed Hasanin, 20-year-old Ahmed Mohammed Atallah Almasri and 24-year-old Mohammed Ali Mohammed Nuseir.
- On [11 May at 04:40](#), Israel's air force targeted the top floor of Tiba, a 300-square-metre, seven-storey residential building, made up of 13 apartments and located in Al-Shati refugee camp, with three missiles. Abdulrahman Yousef Ali Soboh, an 18-year-old with a disability, was killed. His 63-year-old mother, Amira Abdulfattah Abdulrahman Soboh, was also killed.
- On [11 May at 16:30](#), Israel's air force fired two missiles at a two-story house, killing 15-year-old Lina Shrair and her parents Iyad Fathi Shrair and Layali Shrair.
- On [12 May at 01:35](#), an Israeli air strike destroyed an apartment in the Tel al-Hawa neighborhood in western Gaza City, killing five people, including 5-year-old Zaid Mohammed Al-Telbani and his pregnant mother, Reema Saad Kamel Saad. Reema's 2-year-old daughter was missing as of 12 May. The other victims include 13-year-old Hala Hussein Al-Reefi, 41-year-old Wael Abdelkareem Eisa and 43-year-old Hasan Mohammed Al-Qahwaji.
- On [12 May at 14:30](#), Israel's air force fired multiple missiles onto a 125-square-metre four-storey house located in the Al-Amal neighborhood in Khan Younis. The attack led to the death of 49-year-old Miami Abdallah Mousa Arafah and her 28-year-old daughter Hadeel Khaled Mahmoud Arafah. Three other residents of the house, one of them a child, were injured.
- On [13 May 2021 at 01:30](#), Israel's air forces fired 20 missiles at eight residential buildings, home to 15 families, on the main street in the middle of Beit Lahia City. Abdulrahim Mohammed Abdullah Al-Madhoun (63-years-old), and his wife Halima Ali Mohammed Abu Sharakh (66-years-old), were killed. 33 others were injured, including eight women and ten children.
- On [13 May at 17:40](#), Israel's air force fired a missile at a two-storey house in Attanour neighborhood without prior warning. The house, home to two families, was completely destroyed. 3-year-old Hour Mumen Al-Zamli and her pregnant mother, 26-year-old Kholoud Fuad Al-Shaer, were killed. Six others were injured, including three children and two women.



- On [13 May at 20:20](#), Israel's air force fired a missile, without warning, at a three-storey house in Al-Jeniya neighborhood, killing 2-year-old Ibrahim Mohammed Al-Rantisi and his grandmother, Siham Yusuf Azara (66-years-old), his uncle, Raed Ibrahim Azara (29-years-old) and Shaima Diab Musa (21-year-old). Fifteen others, including seven children and three women, were injured.
- On the [evening of 13 May](#), during an airstrike on a house in Bureij refugee camp, Israel's air force killed 39-year-old Manar Khader Eisa, and her 13-year-old daughter, Lina Mohammed Eisa, and inflicted injuries on three other people.
- On the [evening of 13 May](#), the bodies of Rafaat Mohammed Ismail al-Tanani, 39, his wife, Rawya Fathi al-Tanani, 36, and his children, Ismail (7-years-old), Adham (4-years-old), Amir (6-years-old), and Mohammed (2-years-old) were recovered. The family had been reported missing after an Israeli strike destroyed the four-storey residential building that they lived in.
- On [13 May at 23:50](#), Israel's air force fired three missiles at a four-storey house in the middle of Beit Lahia Project Street. The attack led to four Palestinian fatalities, including three women, and the injury of 27, including 10 children. The fatalities include 51-year-old Mohammed Ibrahim Amen and his daughters, Hadeel (18-years-old), Warda (22-years-old), and Walaa (a 24-year-old pregnant woman).
- On [14 May](#), 6-year-old Buthaina Mahmoud Ubaid was pronounced dead from her head wounds. Buthaina was wounded by shrapnel from a missile as she stood in front of her house in Jabalia. On the same day, 30-year-old Mahmoud Mohammed Al-Madhoun was pronounced dead from his wounds, having previously sustained a shrapnel injury to his head as he stood at the entrance of his house when an Israeli airstrike hit adjacent land.
- On [14 May at 20:00](#), Israel's air force fired two missiles at an apartment in the six-storey Al-Rabea Tower in southern Gaza City, killing 12-year-old Abdullah Ashraf Jouda and 18-year-old Adam Mohammed Al-Farawi. The tower contains 27 apartments in total, three of which were completely destroyed in the airstrike, while the rest of the apartments as well as nearby buildings were considerably damaged.
- On [15 May at 01:30](#), nine members of an extended family, including seven children (aged from five to 12), and two women were killed in an Israeli airstrike on a residential building in Al-Shati refugee camp, west of Gaza City. Multiple sources indicated that the attack was not preceded by any prior warning. The fatalities are: Yasmin Abu Hatab (30-years-old) and her children Yousuf (10-years-old), Bilal (9-years-old) Mariyam (7-years-old) and Yamen (5-years-old), as well as Maha Abu Hatab (34-years-old) and her children, Suhaib Al-Hadidi (12-years-old), Abdelrahman Al-Hadid (7-years-old) and Usama (5-years-old).



- The [UN reported](#) that a series of airstrikes on residential areas in Gaza city carried out overnight on 15 May were estimated to have killed over 40 people, with people unaccounted for and believed to be still trapped under the rubble. Three buildings were completely destroyed, two of them residential and belonging to the Abu Al-Ouf and Al-Kolak families,
- As at midday on [16 May](#), the bodies of 30 people had been covered from under the rubble, including from destroyed houses belonging to the Abu Ouf and Al-Qolaq families, with searches ongoing. Both houses were located on Al-Wihda Street, in the middle of Gaza City. The fatalities, including 11 children and nine women, are reported as: Tala Ayman Abu Al-Ouf, 13, Ayat Ibrahim Al-Kolak, 19, Fawaz Amin Al-Kolak, 62, Saadiya Yousef Al-Kolak, 84, Abdelhamid Fawaz Al-Kolak, 22, Ahmed Shukri Al-Kolak, 15, Dana Riyad Eshkuntana, 9, Sameh Fawaz Al-Kolak, 28, Riham Fawaz Al-Kolak, 32, Duaa Umar Al-Kolak, 38, Muin Ahmed Al-Aloul, 66, Baha Amin Al-Kolak, 48, Tawfik Ayman Abu Al-Ouf, 17, Abeer Nimer Ishnita, 29, Amal Jamil Al-Kolak, 42, Rawan Alaa Abu Al-Ouf, 19, Deema Rami Elefranji, 15, Mohammed Muin Al-Kolak, 41, Reem Ahmed Abu Al-Ouf, 40, Luay Mohammed Ouda, 54, Hazem Adel Al-Qumu, 48, Aymen Tawfik Abu Al-Ouf, 49, Izzat Muin Al-Kolak, 44, Adam Izzat Al-Kolak, 3, Qusai Sameh Al-Kolak, 6 months, Taher Shukri Al-Kolak, 23, Zaid Izzar Al-Kolak, 8, Zain Riyad Eshkuntana, 2, Yahya Riyad Eshkuntana, 4, Hana Shukri Al-Kolak, 14.
- On [17 May](#), Israel's air forces targeted a house belonging to the Al-Baz family in Deir Al-Balah, in the Middle Gaza district. 13-year-old Yousef Rafik Al-Baz was killed and his 16-year-old brother was severely wounded.
- On 17 May, the body of 21-year-old Shaima Alaa Sobhi Abu Al-Ouf was recovered from the under the rubble of the Abu Ouf building, which was targeted by Israeli air forces two days before.

In addition to the specific incidents of attacks against family homes listed above, intense shelling near residential buildings has led to the destruction and damage of homes and loss of civilian life.

LPHR is further appalled by reporting that ten Israelis, including two children, have died by rocket attacks launched from Palestinian armed groups into Israel.

LPHR continues to strongly endorse last Monday's statement of UN Humanitarian Coordinator, Lynn Hastings, that has acute relevance to the above incidents, in which she states: *"All parties have obligations under international humanitarian law; the principles of distinction, precaution and proportionality in the use of force must be adhered to. Airstrikes in densely populated areas risk violating these principles. Rockets are indiscriminate by nature and as such violate international law."*



In light of the clear and mounting evidence of severe harm caused to civilians, LPHR urges the UK government to redouble its current diplomatic response and take the following urgent actions for the paramount purpose of protecting civilians:

1. Take all necessary diplomatic measures to achieve the urgent cessation of the use of force;
2. Call on the government of Israel to immediately end targeted attacks on residential buildings in Gaza;
3. Insist that the parties to military action, Israeli or Palestinian, fulfil their binding legal obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law;
4. Call for genuine investigations and full legal accountability into each military attack against a civilian or civilian object, including residential buildings; and
5. Take positive steps (unilaterally and together with other governments) to convene a special session of the Human Rights Council and an urgent meeting of the signatories to the Fourth Geneva Convention.

We would be grateful for your careful consideration of this urgent request and for your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Tareq Shrourou (Director)  
**Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights**