Israeli Extrajudicial Execution Policy Resumed: IOF Airstrike Kills Senior Leader Of Islamic Jihad, And His Wife, In Gaza

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Israel resumes its extrajudicial execution policy against Palestinians, as Israeli warplanes carried out a targeted attack against a senior leader of Palestinian resistance groups at dawn on Tuesday, 12 November 2019. As a result, the targeted Palestinian was killed along with his wife, while 7 others sustained injuries including 4 of the victims' children in the attack on their house in al-Shuja'ya neighborhood in Eastern Gaza. This attack reflects a decision by the highest Israeli military and political offices.

According to PCHR investigation, at approximately 04:00 on Tuesday, IOF warplanes fired a missile at Bahaa' Salim Hassan Abulatta's house (42), member of the al-Quds Brigades' military bureau which is the armed wing of the Islamic Jihad movement, and he was in charge of its northern Gaza Strip activity. Abulatta and his wife, Israa' Mohammed Hassan Abulatta (38), were killed during the targeted airstrike on their apartment, on the second floor of a residential building, resulting in complete destruction. The victims' bodies were extracted from the rubble at the UNRWA school across the street from their apartment due to the extreme intensity of the explosion: his body was found near the gates, while his wife's was found within the school. Furthermore, 7 others sustained shrapnel wounds in the airstrike, including 4 of the victims' children (including two little girls): Salim (19); Mohammed (18); Fatima al-Zahra' (13); Layan (11); two women from the neighborhood: Hanan Shehda Mohyaldeen Helles (26); Shereen Fouad Khalil Helles (21); and Mahmoud Fouad Abdulrahman Abulatta, victim's bodyguard. The injuries were reported to be minor and moderate.

IOF and the Israeli Security Agency (Shin Bet) announced in a press statement by the Israeli military spokesperson, Avichay Adraee, that the targeted attack against prominent Islamic Jihad Leader in Gaza was a joint operation between the Israeli military and the intelligence services. He also reiterated that Israeli Prime Minister and Defense Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, authorized the attack, which is the first extrajudicial execution carried out by Israeli airstrikes since the 2014 Israeli offensive against the Gaza Strip.

[Attachment]The Gaza attack was simultaneous with another targeted airstrike by Israeli warplanes against Islamic Jihad Political Bureau member, Akram al- 'Ajoury, in the Syrian capital, Damascus. According to Islamic Jihad press release and Syrian media, al- 'Ajoury's son was killed in the attack.

Today's attacks are worrying signs of a larger escalation against the Gaza Strip, as precedented in similar Israeli attacks that Palestinian armed groups responded to with a rain of retaliatory rocket fire at Israeli settlements and cities, as is the scenario today. IOF warplanes carried out multiple airstrikes on various targets in the Gaza Strip, some located within densely populated areas, causing great damage and destruction. PCHR teams and fieldworkers are working round the clock to document and investigate each incident.

An Israeli missile targeted and destroyed a residential apartment on the third floor of Khayal Building, on al-Rasheed Street; no injuries were reported. Another missile hit the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR) office in Harara Building in Gaza City center, causing grave damage. The missile hit the 5th floor of the Gaza office, destroying it. The floor was empty as all staff were in a meeting on the sixth floor, which sustained partial damage on the eastern side. Bahjat Ibrahim al-Helou, Head of ICHR Training and Awareness Unit, sustained wounds due to shattering glass.

[Attachment]PCHR team will continue to document, investigate and report on all airstrikes and attacks.

PCHR reminds and stresses that it is always Palestinian civilians who pay the price for the Israeli attacks and military escalations and warns that this policy retains 2 million Palestinian hostages to aggression, fear, anxiety and direct targeting. Palestinian Government Press announced the activation of the emergency state in all government office, and suspension of education until further notice.

Additionally, in another act under the Israeli policy of collective punishment against Palestinians, IOF closed Kerm Shalom Commercial Crossing, east Rafah, which is Gaza's only crossing for goods; and Beit Hanoun 'Erez' Crossing, northern Gaza, dedicated for movement of individuals. IOF also announced reducing the fishing area to 6 nautical miles until further notice, according to Major General Kamil Abu Rokon, Coordinator of the Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), justified by the security

situation in Gaza.

PCHR strongly condemns the Israeli extrajudicial execution policy against Palestinian activists and expresses its concern for a dramatic deterioration of the security situation, warning that the situation is susceptible to a deterioration on all aspects. As such, PCHR:

- Reminds all parties of the need to protect protected civilians under the international humanitarian law (IHL), especially that Gaza Strip civilians and their property have been subjected to direct targeting by IOF in grave violations of the 4th Geneva Convention of 1949, that amount to war crimes; and
- Calls upon the international community to move immediately and urgently to pressure Israel to cease its attacks against Palestinians and to remind it of its obligations under international law, especially the 4th Geneva Convention of 1949.

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