



The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights

Palestinian Medical Personnel

Between Fire and their Duty to Remove the Wounded and Sick The Third Report on Israeli Attacks against Palestinian Medical Personnel

1 September 2002 – 31 December 2004



The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights

**Consultative Status with the ECOSOC of the United Nations
Affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists – Geneva
Member of the International Federation for Human Rights – Paris
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Preface

This report documents grave breaches, including war crimes, of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949 (the Fourth Geneva Convention) and Additional Protocols of 1977 perpetrated by Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) against medical personnel operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) between 1 September 2002 and 31 December 2004.¹

During the reported period, IOF continued to attack Palestinian medical crews and facilities in the OPT, causing disastrous impacts on health conditions of the Palestinian civilian population, who are protected under the Fourth Geneva Convention.² These attacks occurred within the wider context of human rights violations perpetrated by IOF against Palestinian civilians in the OPT, including wilful and extra-judicial executions, destruction of civilian property and depriving people of their means of subsistence.

During the reported period, IOF killed 4 Palestinian medical personnel and wounded more than 200 others. Thus, the number of Palestinian medical personnel killed by IOF since the beginning of the al-Aqsa Intifada has mounted to 19 and the number of wounded medical staff has escalated to at least 450.³

In addition, 38 Palestinian ambulances have been destroyed and 132 medical vehicles have been severely damaged by IOF. IOF also continue to deny access of Palestinians to medical care, predominantly by restricting the

¹ PCHR published two previous reports on attacks by IOF against medical personnel operating in the OPT; the first was published in April 2001 and the second was published in September 2002. These two reports documented attacks by IOF against medical personnel from the beginning of the current Intifada until 31 August 2002.

² Article 4 of the Fourth Geneva Convention defines protected persons as follows: "Persons protected by the Convention are those who, at a given moment and in any manner whatsoever, find themselves, in case of a conflict or occupation, in the hands of a Party to the conflict or Occupying Power of which they are not nationals... Persons protected by the Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field of August 12, 1949, or by the Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea of August 12, 1949, or by the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War of August 12, 1949, shall not be considered as protected persons within the meaning of the present Convention."

³ This number includes only medical personnel who were killed while on duty. For instance, the number does not include Dr. Thabet Thabet who was assassinated by Israeli occupying forces on 31 December 2000, and Mahmoud Zahika who was killed by Israeli occupying forces on 18 May 2002.

movement of ambulances through checkpoints. Under the current total siege of the OPT, 65 Palestinian civilians have died at Israeli military checkpoints, as IOF prevented their evacuation to hospitals.

Since the beginning of the current Intifada, 3,214 Palestinians, including 618 children, have been killed and at least 40,000 others have been wounded by IOF. Hundreds have been left permanently disabled. Palestinian medical personnel have offered the wounded medical services. The large numbers of casualties clearly indicate that Palestinian medical personnel have carried out work that exceeds the resources available to them.

Israeli Policies in the OPT

IOF have escalated their excessive and disproportionate use of force in the OPT. Israeli practices on the ground indicate that the Israeli government has issued orders to its occupation forces to commit illegal acts, including the indiscriminate use of force against Palestinian civilians, which has resulted in many civilian deaths. For example, on 20 October 2003, 7 Palestinian civilians, including a child and an on-duty doctor, were killed in Nusseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip in an attempt by IOF to extrajudicially execute members of the Palestinian resistance. The targeted individuals managed to escape, but 50 Palestinian civilians were wounded in the attack, including 11 children. An 8th civilian died later from his injuries.⁴

IOF have not taken any measures to minimize the numbers of casualties among Palestinian civilians, including medical crews, which indicates that the Israeli political and judiciary establishments agree, or at least do not reject the use of excessive force against Palestinian civilians, in violation of international humanitarian law. The Israeli executive, legislature and judiciary cannot claim that they do not have information regarding each of these attacks against Palestinian medical crews, as they receive regular reports in this regard and media reports detail each incident.

IOF have continued to commit grave breaches of international humanitarian law throughout the OPT. On 28 March 2002, IOF initiated a wide scale offensive on West Bank towns, known as "Operation Defensive Shield", during which they used various types of weapons against Palestinian towns, villages and refugee camps. During this offensive, IOF killed at least 400 Palestinians, wounded more than 2,000 and largely destroyed the civilian infrastructure. In the Gaza Strip, IOF escalated their attacks on the Palestinian civilian population. They launched two wide scale offensives on Rafah and Beit Hanoun.⁵

IOF have continued to attack Palestinian and international medical crews, obstructing their humanitarian mission to provide medical assistance to more than 3 million Palestinians living in the OPT. IOF have killed a number of medical personnel, attacked medical facilities and prevented the entry of medicines and medical supplies.

⁴ For more details, see PCHR's *Weekly Report*, 16 – 22 October 2003.

⁵ During the period 12-24 May 2004, IOF launched a wide scale military operation in Rafah known as "Operation Rainbow." During this operation, IOF killed 54 Palestinians, wounded at least 200 others and left large destruction of civilian property and infrastructure, likened by international organizations and diplomatic delegations to the aftermath of an earthquake. In the period 29 June – 5 August 2004, IOF launched another wide scale military operation in Beit Hanoun. During this operation, they killed 19 Palestinians, wounded dozens of others, razed at least 4000 dunums of agricultural land and destroyed 60 houses. For more details, see PCHR's *Rafah's New Nakba: Report on Violations of Economic and Social Rights in Rafah during the Latest Israeli Incursion (12-24 May 2004)*, August 2004; and *Israeli Aggression on Beit Hanoun (29 June – 5 August 2004)*

Continued attacks by IOF on Palestinian medical crews strongly supports PCHR's conclusion that such attacks are instructed by the Israeli political and military establishments. PCHR has already warned of the continuation of such attacks.⁶ IOF have also launched a campaign of incitement against Palestinian medical crews and vehicles, accusing them of illegal activities such as the transportation of weapons and members of the Palestinian resistance. Recently, the Israeli Defence Minister claimed that UNRWA ambulances were used in military activities. However, media reports documenting Israeli attacks on Palestinian medical crews proved that these accusations were not true.

IOF have imposed a total siege on the OPT since the beginning of the current Intifada, severely restricting the movement of Palestinian civilians and goods. These measures have not excluded medical and food supplies and the movement of ambulances. IOF positioned at various checkpoints throughout the OPT have obstructed the evacuation of patients to hospital. Subsequently, 68 patients have died due to the obstruction of their evacuation to hospitals by IOF. Dozens of pregnant women have been forced to give birth near military checkpoints, as IOF denied them access to hospitals. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, IOF have obstructed the evacuation of patients to hospitals in 1,200 cases.

Since the beginning of the current Intifada, IOF have destroyed 38 ambulances and severely damaged 132 medical vehicles.

All of these attacks have occurred despite the fact that Palestinian medical crews wear clearly marked uniforms, which indicate their status as medical staff, and ambulances, hospitals and medical centres in the OPT are clearly marked as health facilities.

In spite of these difficulties, Palestinian medical personnel have done their best to carry out their humanitarian mission to evacuate the wounded, patients with health problems and pregnant women to hospitals. Since the beginning of the current Intifada, 3,214 Palestinians, including 618 children, have been killed and more than 40,000 others have been wounded by IOF. Most of the wounded have received medical treatment in ambulances and field medical units, as hospitals and medical centres are relatively far from the areas where clashes usually take place. The high number of casualties and injuries in the OPT indicate the heavy burden on Palestinian medical personnel and resources. Presently, the need for health care in the OPT exceeds the capacity of medical units.

⁶ See PCHR's previous reports on Israeli attacks on Palestinian medical crews in the periods 29 September 2000 – 11 April 2001 and 12 April 2001 – 31 August 2002.

Israeli Attacks on Medical Personnel

During the reported period, IOF continued to attacks medical personnel and violate their rights to protection and safety while carrying out their humanitarian duty of saving the lives of civilians. IOF used excessive force against medical personnel to prevent them from carrying out their duties of offering help to the wounded and patients.

IOF opened fire at ambulances, hospitals, clinics and medical centres. During the reported period, IOF killed 4 medical personnel and wounded dozens of others in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The health conditions of hundreds of civilians also deteriorated as IOF checkpoints obstructed their access to hospitals. These attacks require immediate international and local legal action to pressurize IOF to respect the right of each person to receive medical care, and comply to international humanitarian law, especially the provisions relevant to the freedom of movement of medical crews.

Violation of the Right to Life and Personal Security of Palestinian Medical Personnel

The rights to life, freedom and personal security are ensured by international humanitarian and human rights law. Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that "*everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.*" Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides: "*Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life...*".⁷ The Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 prohibits violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture against protected persons.

IOF have attacked Palestinian medical personnel and violated their right to carry out their humanitarian mission of offering assistance to the wounded and sick. They also prevented removal of dead bodies, whether civilians or militants, an act that constitutes a war crime under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. IOF have ignored the complaints of the Palestine Red Crescent Society and many international medical organizations. They have even escalated their attacks on Palestinian medical personnel.

IOF have unlawfully attacked Palestinian civilians, without making a distinction between militants and civilians. At the same time, they have attacked medical personnel

⁷ Israel ratified and became a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on 3 October 1991, which entered into force on 3 January 1992. Under the Covenant, Israel is obligated to respect the rights included therein of the Palestinian population in the OPT, as most of these territories are under Israeli jurisdiction according to the Interim Agreement signed between Israel and Palestine Liberation Organization.

attempting to give medical attention to civilians wounded by these indiscriminate attacks. This policy seems to be intended to deter medical personnel from providing medical services in areas of conflict. During wide scale offensives on towns in the Gaza Strip, especially Rafah, Beit Hanoun, Jabalya and Khan Yunis, IOF prevented Palestinian medical personnel from providing any medical services in these areas. Nevertheless, Palestinian medical personnel challenged the dangers in order to provide medical help to the wounded and remove the dead.

Despite these attacks and the shortage of medical equipment, especially following the wide scale Israeli offensive on the West Bank in spring 2002, Palestinian medical personnel still do their best to provide medical services. Attacks by IOF on Palestinian medical personnel have escalated since the beginning of the current Intifada, and these attacks now occur on a regular basis, which indicates that medical personnel are being specifically targeted by IOF.

Killings of Medical Personnel

During the reported period, four Palestinian medical personnel (a physician, two nurses and a civil defence staff member) were killed by IOF in separate incidents. This indicates that IOF have continued to disregard the protection afforded to medical personnel under international humanitarian law. Medical personnel and vehicles are clearly marked and distinguishable, which means that attacks against them by IOF have not been accidental. With these four victims, the number of medical personnel killed by IOF since the beginning of the current Intifada has mounted to 19.

PCHR has investigated cases of fatalities among Palestinian medical personnel cited below:

- **IOF Shoot Dead Two Palestinian Medical Personnel in al-Wafaa' Hospital in Gaza City**

On Wednesday night, 5 February 2003, IOF killed 2 Palestinian medical personnel who were on duty in al-Wafaa' Hospital in Gaza city. This illegal action was perpetrated by IOF as part of the escalation of Israeli illegal military actions in the OPT. The killing of the two medical personnel came less than 24 hours after Israeli soldiers had violently beaten a French doctor from Medicines sans Frontieres at al-Tuffah checkpoint (which separates the al-Mawasi area from Khan Yunis). The doctor had been attempting, along with his colleagues, to enter the area, which has been completely isolated from the rest of the Gaza Strip, to attempt to provide medical aid for its residents.

According to PCHR's information, at approximately 23:40 on Wednesday, 5 February 2003, IOF moved into al-Sha'af area in the northeast of Gaza City. They surrounded a 4-storey house, in which 4 families, numbering 41 people, live, owned by Mohammed

Salah al-Ghoula, approximately 60 metres away from al-Wafaa' Hospital. IOF then destroyed the door, broke into the house and searched it. During the house raid, at approximately 23:55, an Israeli soldier fired a live bullet at a window on the first floor of the hospital, the sign for which is clearly marked in Arabic and English. The bullet hit a nurse in the chest and exited to hit another nurse in the chest as well, thereby killing the two:

1. 'Abdul Karim Hamed Anwar Lubbad, 22, from Jabalya; and
2. 'Omar Sa'ad al-Din Hassan, from the al-Zaytoun neighborhood in Gaza city.

According to a janitor in the hospital, who had accompanied the nurses, they had gone to check on a patient who was crying out in pain. As soon as they entered the room, a shot was heard. The two nurses fell to the ground. They were bleeding. Doctors made efforts to save their lives, but Lubbad died immediately and his colleague died shortly after him.

- **A Fireman Killed by IOF in Jabalya**

In a major onslaught against the Gaza Strip, on Thursday 6 March 2003, IOF killed 11 Palestinians, mostly civilians, including three children and an old man, when they invaded the northern Gaza Strip town of Jabalya and its refugee camp. Five of the victims, including a fireman, were killed by one tank shell, while they were trying to put out a fire that had broken out in a house. In addition, about 75 Palestinians, including two journalists and four medical personnel, were injured; more than 10 of them seriously. A number of ambulances were also severely damaged.

According to PCHR's investigation and eyewitness reports, at approximately 00:00, IOF, reinforced with dozens of heavy military vehicles and combat helicopters and covered by intense shelling, moved from the Beit Hanoun crossing in the northern Gaza Strip, approximately 4km to the south on Salah al-Din Street, towards the edges of Jabalya. At approximately 05:30, IOF fired several artillery shells at a 450-square-meter, 4-storey house, in which 6 families numbering 21 people live, owned by Ahmed Mohammed Faraj Saleh. The shells hit stores located under the house, burning them. Firemen were not able to reach the house until 06:45. A number of Palestinian civilians gathered to help firemen extinguish the fire. Immediately, an Israeli tank fired a shell at them, although firemen and fire engines were clearly marked. Five Palestinian civilians, including a fireman, Naji Isma'il Abu Jalila, 24, were killed.⁸

- **A Doctor Killed by an Aerial Attack**

At approximately 21:15 on Monday, 20 October 2003, Israeli helicopter gunships launched a missile at a civilian car travelling approximately 150 meters to the east of Nusseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. The missile reportedly hit the front of

⁸ For more details, see PCHR's *Weekly Report*, 6-12 March 2003.

the car, but the passengers managed to flee the vehicle. As Palestinian civilians gathered around the scene of the attack, Israeli helicopter gunships launched another missile towards the car, sending shrapnel into the crowd. Seven Palestinian civilians were killed instantly, including a doctor from Nusseirat Medical Center, Zain al-'Aabdin Mohammed Mahmoud Shahin, who was tending to those wounded by the first missile. 50 civilians were wounded, including 10 seriously, one of whom died from his injuries on Wednesday evening, 22 October 2003.

In his testimony to PCHR, the doctor's father, Mohammed Mahoud Shahin, 78, said:

"My son was on duty that night. At approximately 21:30, my neighbours informed me that he was injured by an Israeli aerial attack on Nusseirat refugee camp, when he was offering medical assistance to the wounded. I informed my other son who has a pharmacy near our house and he in turn phoned Nuseirat. We were informed that he was transferred to Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. My son died from his wound by shrapnel to the head and the chest. My colleagues told me that he was carrying a child who was wounded by shrapnel from a missile fired by Israeli helicopter gunships, when the Israeli helicopter gunships fired another missile. He was wounded by shrapnel from the missile."

Dozens of Wounded Palestinian Medical Personnel

During the reported period, at least 200 medical personnel were wounded by IOF, some by heavy and medium calibre bullets and tanks shells, and others were severely beaten by Israeli soldiers. Thus, the number of Palestinian medical personnel wounded by IOF since the beginning of the current Intifada has mounted to at least 450. Dozens of medical personnel are severely disabled from serious wounds they sustained by IOF. Most of them sustained wounds in the upper part of the body. Almost all of these medical personnel were wounded while on duty. Some of them were transferred to hospitals outside the OPT, due to the lack of necessary medical equipment.⁹

From these figures, it is clear that IOF have not made any effort to ensure the safety and security of Palestinian medical personnel while on duty. Dozens of cases in which IOF deliberately attacked Palestinian medical personnel have been documented. Further, IOF have constantly failed to investigate such attacks and hold those responsible for them accountable.

IOF have carried out attacks on Palestinian medical personnel, while they were wearing clearly marked medical uniforms. IOF have disregarded calls by the ICRC, UNRWA and international human rights organizations to comply with provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and allow medical personnel to operate in the OPT without

⁹ See the web page of the Palestinian Ministry of Health: www.moh.ps.

restrictions, and they have even systematically escalated their attacks on medical personnel causing more casualties.

Even though Palestinian medical personnel wear clearly marked uniforms and travel in clearly marked ambulances, IOF have constantly attacked them. Nevertheless, Palestinian medical personnel have continued to carry out their humanitarian duty and provide medical aid to the wounded and sick.

Israeli attacks against Palestinian medical personnel violate international human rights law and humanitarian law. Impacts of such attacks are not limited to medical personnel, but also affect the rights of the wounded and sick. The inability of Palestinian medical personnel to move freely and quickly has resulted in dozens of deaths among sick and wounded civilians. A number of the wounded died as medical personnel were not able to attend them on time due to restrictions imposed by IOF. Attacks by IOF on Palestinian medical personnel peaked during wide scale offensives on towns in the Gaza Strip.

Following are details of some cases, in which Palestinian medical personnel were wounded by IOF:

- At approximately 07:00 on 7 October 2002, IOF positioned in military posts in the vicinity of "Gan Aur" and "Gadid" settlements, southwest of Khan Yunis, and "Neve Dekalim" settlement, west of the town, opened fire at Khan Yunis refugee camp and al-Nimsawi and Baten al-Samin neighborhoods. A Palestinian civilian, 23-year-old Mohammed Farhan Shaloula, was killed by a live bullet to the back. Seven others were wounded. Live bullets and artillery shells also hit Nasser Hospital, approximately 600m east of "Neve Dekalim" settlement. Four Palestinian civilians, including two members of the hospital staff, were wounded. Those wounded inside the hospital were:
 1. Nafe' Burhan al-Bura'ei, 22, a maintenance worker at the hospital, critically wounded by a live bullet to the head, while at the hospital. He was evacuated to Shifa' Hospital in Gaza and then to an Israeli hospital.
 2. Jibril 'Ateya 'Aabed, 45, a driver of the hospital, wounded by a live bullet to the chest.
 3. Munther Radwan al-Masri, 27, wounded by a live bullet to the left thigh while at hospital.
 4. 'Aadel Yousef Eslayeh, 36, wounded by shrapnel to the face while at hospital.

In his testimony to PCHR, Jebril Jaber 'Aabed, a driver for Nasser Hospital, said:

"I was called to hospital at approximately 01:30 on Monday, 7 October 2002, after the hospital declared a state of emergency when IOF invaded parts of Khan Yunis. I carried out my duties until Israeli tanks withdrew from those areas. At approximately 08:15, while I was in the facility designed for ambulances in the eastern part of the main building of the hospital, I felt that a live bullet hit me in the chest. I also heard sounds of

live bullets hitting walls. Immediately, those who were near me moved me to the reception department, where I received medical treatment."

- On 21 November 2002, IOF that had moved into the villages of Khuza'a and 'Abasan, east of Khan Yunis, opened fire at a number of Palestinian ambulances that came to offer help to the wounded. Three ambulances were damaged and 2 paramedics were wounded:
 1. Ahmed 'Ali Jasser, 28, wounded by a live bullet to the left thigh, while he was inside an ambulance of the Palestine Red Crescent Society; and
 2. 'Emad al-Din Mohammed Jodei'an Abu Jamous, 25, wounded by shrapnel in the head, while he was inside an ambulance of the Qura'an and Sunna Society.
- On 2 March 2003, IOF that had moved into Khan Yunis opened fire indiscriminately at Palestinian houses in al-Nimsawi neighborhood. A Palestinian civilian, 'Abed Rabbu D'ib 'Abed Rabbu, 52, was injured by shrapnel to the chest and back. He bled to death. According to eyewitnesses, 4 artillery shells hit the bedroom of his house, which is located in al-Nimsawi neighborhood, approximately 100m away from Nasser Hospital. Palestinian medical personnel were not able to reach the area due to the intensive Israeli shelling and because the Israeli soldiers denied them access to the affected house. 'Abed Rabbu bled to death. His body was evacuated to hospital at approximately 07:00, after IOF had withdrawn from the area. Also as a result of Israeli indiscriminate shelling and gunfire, 39 Palestinians, mostly civilians, including 10 children, were wounded. Seven of those were wounded inside Nasser Hospital, including two staff members: Mahmoud Mohammed al-Bardawil, 35, a nurse; and Ahmed Salman al-Faqa'awi, a worker.
- In a major onslaught against the Gaza Strip, on 6 March 2003, IOF killed 11 Palestinians, mostly civilians, when they invaded the northern Gaza Strip town of Jabalya and its refugee camp. In addition, at least 75 Palestinians were injured. This number includes four medical personnel: 'Awad Ahmed Abu Marasa, a paramedic; Yusri 'Aayesh al-Masri, an ambulance driver; Jihad 'Abdul Karim Abu 'Ataya, director of Jabalya ambulance station; and Mohammed Shihda al-Muqayad, a paramedic. Ambulances faced difficulties in reaching the affected areas. Three ambulances, including an UNRWA ambulance, were damaged.
- On 10 October 2003, IOF conducted a large scale incursion into Rafah refugee camp, adjacent to the Egyptian border in the southern Gaza Strip. Under cover of intense shelling and gunfire from tanks and helicopters, IOF invaded the area, one of the most densely populated in the Gaza Strip. During the 2-day incursion, 8 Palestinians were killed, including 3 children, and 53 were wounded; 20 seriously. Women, children and elderly people were among the casualties. An ambulance driver, Rajaa' Salah 'Omar, 30, was seriously wounded by a live bullet to the back. In an unprecedented

escalation of the destruction of civilian property, Israeli occupying forces destroyed 170 Palestinian houses, a number of civilian facilities and infrastructure in the area.

- On 28 January 2004, IOF killed 8 Palestinians, including 3 children, and injured four others, including an ambulance driver of the Palestine Red Crescent Society, during a wide scale incursion into al-Zaitoun neighborhood in the south of Gaza City.
- On 21 March 2004, IOF killed 5 Palestinians, including a man and his wife, injured 9 others, and destroyed 5 houses in 'Abasan village, east of Khan Yunis. IOF moved into the village to arrest one of the victims, who was allegedly wanted. During this incursion, IOF used excessive force against civilian residential areas. A Palestinian ambulance driver, Ayman Salman Abu Draz, 38, was among those who were injured. He was hit by shrapnel from a live bullet to the chest.
- On 21 April 2004, IOF moved into the northern Gaza Strip town of Beit Lahia. They opened fire at Palestinian civilians and property. As a result, 9 Palestinians, including 2 children, were killed and at least 50 others were injured, including 25 children and an ambulance driver and a paramedic of the Palestine Red Crescent Society. IOF also opened fire at an ambulance of the Palestinian Ministry of Health. The ambulance was damaged, but no casualties were reported.
- On 22 April 2004, IOF opened fired at Palestinian children in al-Nada housing project in the northern Gaza Strip. Three children were killed and 30 civilians were wounded. IOF opened fire also at Palestinian ambulances that attempted to evacuate the wounded to hospitals.

According to investigations conducted by PCHR, at approximately 07:30, IOF, located near the al-Nada housing project in the northern Gaza Strip, opened fire at a number of Palestinian children who were throwing stones at them. One of the children, Mohammed Rasem Ahmed al-Malfouh, 17, from Beit Lahia, was killed by a live bullet to the neck.

In the afternoon of 22 April 2004, IOF fired at Palestinian demonstrators and ambulances near the al-Nada housing project in the northern Gaza Strip. At approximately 16:00, 10-year-old Asmaa' Hamdi Abu Tabaq moved from her house in the al-Nada housing project to purchase goods from a neighbouring grocery shop. On her way back home, she was hit by two live bullets to the abdomen and the left arm. Ambulances were not able to reach her for 5 minutes, as Israeli gunfire continued intensely. Asmaa' was later evacuated to a hospital in Beit Lahia, but medical efforts to save her life failed and she was pronounced dead 3 hours later.

In his testimony on the incident, Mohammed Salah Nassar, a volunteer paramedic at Kamal 'Edwan Hospital in Beit Lahia, said:

“At approximately 16:40, I was standing near an ambulance of the Ministry of Health. I was carrying out my job as a volunteer paramedic at Kamal 'Edwan Hospital in Beit Lahia. Israeli soldiers and about 6 heavy military vehicles, including two bulldozers, were positioned on a hill in the al-Nada area, approximately seven meters away from me. Israeli soldiers were intensely firing at the area, so I went to the ambulance which was hit by several live bullets, but no one was hurt. Then, I saw a little child standing on the stairs of the apartment tower building number 8. She was calling for us to offer her help. She was about 20 meters away from us. We realized that she was wounded by the Israeli gunfire, but we were not able to reach her as the gunfire continued. About five minutes later, the gunfire stopped for a while, so we hurried towards the child. The ambulance driver, Khalil al-Sidawi, and I were able to reach her. She was putting her hand on her abdomen to stop the blood. When the driver carried her, internal parts of the abdomen fell out. Soon after, Israeli soldiers resumed firing at the area, and we sheltered behind a sand barrier. In the meantime, another paramedic called us to help him evacuate two persons who were wounded by live bullets, about five meters away from us, but we were not able to reach them. The Israeli gunfire stopped for a short while, and thus we were able to take the child to the ambulance. As soon as we arrived at the hospital, the child was transferred to the intensive care unit. She underwent surgery, but died three hours later.”

- At approximately 00:30 on 5 May 2004, IOF, reinforced by about 30 heavy military vehicles, moved approximately 700 meters into Palestinian areas located to the northwest of "Kfar Darom" settlement, southeast of Deir al-Balah. They opened fire at Palestinian houses in the area. At approximately 08:00, a member of the Palestinian National Security Force, 'Abdullah 'Ali 'Abdul Fattah al-Jammal, 35, from al-Boreij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, was killed and one of his colleagues was injured, when IOF opened fire at their station. At approximately 10:00, at least 12 Palestinian civilians were injured by Israeli gunfire. This number includes an ambulance driver of the Palestine Red Crescent Society, Mohammed Khamis al-Salhi, 35.
- At approximately 19:25 on 15 June 2004, during the funeral procession of al-Lahwani, Israeli troops surrounded 'Abed al-Rahman mosque in Balata refugee camp. A number of children and young men threw stones at these troops, which immediately fired at them. Five Palestinian civilians, including 2 children and an ambulance driver, were wounded. The ambulance driver, Firas al-Bakri, 24, was wounded by a rubber-coated metal bullet to the head.

- On 10 July 2004, Mohammed Salehn Juha, 19, a member of the Palestinian Medical Service, was wounded by a live bullet to the chest during an incursion by IOF into Sheikh 'Ejlin and al-Zaytoun neighborhoods in Gaza City.
- On 10 August 2004, 'Adnan Jasser al-Souso, 47, a paramedic from the Palestine Red Crescent Society, was injured by shrapnel to the chest, when IOF moved into Nablus and opened fire at Palestinian civilians. A Palestinian child was killed and 12 other civilians were wounded.
- At approximately 11.30 on 31 August 2004, IOF positioned at al Matahen checkpoint, north of Khan Yunis, opened fire on Palestinian civilians waiting to pass through. Two medical staff members in an ambulance were injured: Subhi Mamohodd Madi, 50, the driver, injured by shrapnel to the arm; and Rafiq 'Abulah al-'Aabadli, 37, a doctor, injured by shrapnel in his right thigh.

Cruel, Inhumane and Degrading Treatment of Palestinian Medical Personnel

Although IOF is obliged under international law to provide protection for medical personnel while carrying out their humanitarian duties, they have continued to attack medical personnel. No serious investigation has been conducted into any attack by IOF or Israeli settlers against Palestinian medical personnel, which raises doubts that such attacks were launched in accordance with superior instructions. Palestinian medical personnel have been subject to cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment by both IOF and settlers. As a result, many medical personnel have been wounded and have faced difficulties in providing medical aid for patients and the wounded.

- On 5 February 2004, IOF attacked a delegation of Mediciens Sans Frontieres, headed by a French citizen, at al-Tuffah military checkpoint at the entrance to the al-Mawasi area in Khan Yunis. The delegation was on a field tour coordinated in advance with IOF, but IOF prevented them from crossing the checkpoint and beat members of the delegation.
- Mediciens Sans Frontieres submitted a complaint regarding assaults by IOF against a team from the organization on the settler road that links "Netzarim" settlement with "Karni" crossing point, south of Gaza City. The organization stated that the team was visiting a house belonging to the al-'Aaidi family, in which 28 individuals, including 20 children, live. IOF have seized the roof of this house and have transformed it into a military observation point. They have imposed severe restrictions on the movement of the family. They have lived under severe conditions. The organization stated that IOF fired at its staff members in order to drive them away from the area. The organization submitted applications to the Humanitarian Affairs Coordinator of IOF to be allowed to enter the family's house

in April 2004, but it did not receive any official response. On 28 April 2004, a team of the organization went to visit the family's house, but IOF fired at the team seven times. The team was forced to leave the area.

- At approximately 16:00 on 25 January 2004, IOF positioned at the entrance of al-'Arroub refugee camp near Hebron, which was under curfew at the time, stopped an ambulance from the Palestinian Red Crescent Society that was transporting a woman suffering from a kidney condition from Hebron Hospital to the refugee camp. They searched the ambulance and prevented it from moving into the camp or back to the hospital. An Israeli officer threatened the medical crew that he would fire at them, if they did not follow his orders. Then, he forced the crew to move slowly towards the refugee camp in the ambulance. When the ambulance moved into the camp, the medical crew were surprised by the presence of 3 Israeli soldiers on the back of the ambulance. A few minutes later, Israeli soldiers ordered the ambulance driver to stop. The soldiers chased and fired at a number of young men. IOF allowed the ambulance to take the patient to her home and ordered the crew not to use communication sets for 15 minutes. At approximately 17:20, IOF ordered the medical crew to leave the camp. They opened fire as they left, terrifying the medical crew.
- On 11 April 2004, a paramedic from the Palestine Red Crescent Society in Nablus was violently beaten by IOF. According to the paramedic, on Sunday morning, 11 April 2004, while he and one of his colleagues were transporting two patients in an ambulance from Nablus to Ramallah, IOF positioned at a checkpoint on al-Sawia road stopped them. They searched the ambulance and took the identity cards of the two paramedics. They also forced the two patients to get out of the ambulance. Soon after, IOF ordered the medical crew to travel back. The crew made a phone call to coordinate their passage through the ICRC. Then, they were allowed to cross the checkpoint. Another Israeli military checkpoint stopped the ambulance as it was travelling on Road 90, near 'Ein Yabroud village. An Israeli soldier checked the identity cards of the paramedics. The soldiers ordered the paramedic in charge of the mission to get out of the ambulance, in order for them to search it. The soldier pushed the paramedic for no apparent reason. When the paramedic asked the soldier why he was pushing him, he hit him on the head and the neck and pushed him towards the ambulance. Soon after, the soldier raised his hand to hit the paramedic on the head, but the paramedic held the soldier's hand. Immediately, 4 other soldiers intervened and violently beat the paramedic. When his colleague attempted to intervene, Israeli soldiers beat and threatened him. Israeli soldiers continued to beat the first paramedic sporadically for nearly half an hour. Then, they took him blindfolded and handcuffed in a military jeep towards "Oufar" military post, claiming that he had attempted to beat a soldier. There, he was violently beaten. Nearly an hour later, IOF released the paramedic after threatening to shoot him, if he attacked any other soldier in the future, as they claimed he had done on this occasion.

- At approximately 15:00 on Monday, 26 July 2004, an ambulance driver of the Palestinian Union of Medical Relief Committees, Muntasser Hanthawi, 24, was travelling from Nablus to Jenin. When he crossed an Israeli military checkpoint at al-Naqoura crossroads, he saw a Palestinian taxi stopping in the area. He learnt that there was a patient in the taxi, so he offered help. Soon, an Israeli military jeep arrived in the area. Three Israeli soldiers got out and violently beat Hathnawi, even though he was in uniform. Israeli soldiers handcuffed Hathnawi and took him towards the nearby checkpoint. There, he was held for an hour until the ICRC intervened to release him. Hathnawi sustained bruises throughout his body.
- At approximately 10:00 on Tuesday, 24 August 2004, Hassan Mohammed 'Awad, 27, from Ethna village south of Hebron, was transporting a number of patients in an ambulance towards Beit Jala Hospital. When he arrived at an Israeli military checkpoint erected near "Kfar Etzion" settlement, north of Hebron, Israeli soldiers stopped him. They forced him and the patients to get out of the ambulance and checked them. When 'Awad protested at the way the Israeli soldiers were dealing with the patients, the soldiers violently beat and handcuffed him. They held him for nearly an hour. 'Awad sustained injuries throughout his body.
- On Saturday afternoon, 11 September 2004, IOF positioned at Beit Eiba checkpoint, west of Nablus, held Leena Budair, 24, a paramedic from Far'oun village south of Tulkarm, for several hours. According to eyewitnesses, IOF forced her to get out of an ambulance from them Palestine Red Crescent Society, while she was on her way to Nablus, and held her for several hours.

Arrests and Detentions of Palestinian Medical Personnel by IOF

During the reported period, IOF arrested and detained a number of Palestinian medical personnel and raided hospitals and medical facilities, in an attempt to prevent medical personnel from carrying out their humanitarian mission. IOF escalated their attacks on Palestinian medical personnel and facilities during incursions into Palestinian communities.

The following are cases of arrests and detentions of Palestinian medical personnel during the reported period:

- On 1 April 2004, IOF raided the Mental Health Hospital in Bethlehem after opening fire at it. IOF arrested 13 Palestinians, including 8 staff members of the hospital and the Palestinian Military Health Service, and damaged the building and equipment of the hospital.

According to investigations conducted by PCHR, at approximately 02:30, Israeli occupying forces, reinforced by heavy military vehicles and 2 helicopters, moved into Bethlehem. At approximately 02:50, they surrounded the Mental Health Hospital. A number of Israeli soldiers took positions on the roofs of neighbouring houses. They opened fire at the hospital and called through megaphones to those who were inside the hospital to get out, without mentioning names. At approximately 03:00, IOF raided the houses of Dr. 'Essam Bannoura, director of the hospital, in Beit Sahour, east of Bethlehem and 'Aadel 'Eissa al-Lahham, the administrative director of the hospital, in al-Souha village, southwest of Bethlehem. They handcuffed the two and detained them, while they were still in their nightwear, approximately 30 meters away from the hospital. At approximately 03:10, IOF resumed firing at the hospital. The Israeli gunfire continued for one hour, after which IOF broke into the hospital. They opened fire inside the hospital and damaged equipment. They arrested 13 Palestinians, including 4 hospital staff members and 4 staff members of the Palestinian Military Medical Service.

According to Dr. 'Essam Bannoura, the losses incurred by the hospital during this Israeli military attack is estimated at US\$500,000. The building and equipment of the hospital were severely damaged.

- At approximately 13:15 on Thursday, 17 June 2004, IOF positioned at a military checkpoint at Jeet crossroads, east of Qalqilya, arrested 'Alaa' 'Omar Samman, 26, an ambulance driver from the Palestine Red Crescent Society, when he was transporting a sick child to Rafidya Hospital in Nablus. IOF took him to the "Shavi Shomron" settlement, where they detained him for 4 hours. Then, they moved him to Hawara detention centre, south of Nablus, where they detained him for two days.
- On 2 November 2004, following an extra-judicial execution of 3 Palestinians in Nablus, on the evening of 1 November 2004, shortly after midnight, IOF raided and searched the emergency centre of the Palestine Red Crescent Society in the city. They also searched a number of ambulances and interrogated medical crews.

Attacks on Medical Institutions and Facilities by IOF

Since the beginning of the current Intifada, Palestinian medical institutions and facilities, including hospitals and clinics, have been attacked by Israeli occupying forces. These facilities have not been immune to the shelling that has targeted Palestinian residential areas. During the reported period, IOF escalated their attacks on Palestinian medical institutions and facilities. These institutions and facilities were severely damaged. The following are the most significant attacks by IOF on Palestinian medical institutions and facilities during the reported period:

- On 7 October 2002, Israeli tanks and helicopter gunships opened fire at the Palestine Red Crescent Society Hospital in Khan Yunis, during an incursion into the town. The building was severely damaged and medical crews were unable to carry out their humanitarian mission. No casualties were reported.
- At approximately 10:30, on 5 December 2002, IOF in a military post in the Tal Zo'rob area, southwest of Rafah, fired two artillery shells to the east. The two shells fell on the Egyptian border near Zo'rob square. As a result, shrapnel hit a building of the Palestine Red Crescent Society in the area, damaging its doors and windows, but no casualties were reported.
- On 6 March 2003, IOF opened fire at a building in the northern Gaza Strip town of Beit Hanoun. A pharmacy belonging to Mohammed 'Abdul Hadi Shihab, which is located on the first floor of the building, was severely damaged.
- On 22 May 2003, a medicine factory belonging to Marwan Ahmed al-Astal in the northern Gaza Strip town of Beit Hanoun, was severely damaged when IOF moved into the town and opened fire indiscriminately. Losses were estimated at US\$30,000.
- On 4 March 2004, an ambulance from the Palestine Red Crescent Society was hit by several live bullets when it was near the office of the society in Rafah, during an Israeli military incursion into the town. Ambulances faced extreme difficulties in providing help to the wounded, due to the intense Israeli gunfire.
- At approximately 01:30 on 15 May 2004, an Israeli helicopter gunship launched 3 missiles at the first floor of a 3-storey building owned by Akram Sabri al-Hatu in the densely populated al-Rimal neighborhood in Gaza City. Two missiles struck the offices of the Union of Nurses located on the first floor of the building, causing extensive destruction. The third missile struck an uninhabited residential apartment located near the office of the Union of Nurses, also causing extensive destruction. A number of neighbouring houses and shops were also damaged. 10 Palestinian civilians, including a paramedic, were injured in the attack, and a number of other civilians were treated for shock.
- At approximately 12:00, on 23 July 2004, IOF positioned in military posts in the vicinity of "Neve Dekalim" settlement, west of Khan Yunis, opened fire at Palestinian houses located to the east and north. A number of live bullets hit rooms in the Nasser Hospital, nearly 700 meters away from the source of fire. A patient, 'Abdullah Ibrahim Abu Mustafa, 35, was injured by shrapnel to the left hand, and a number of rooms were damaged.
- At approximately 17:00, on 28 July 2004, IOF positioned in military posts in the vicinity of "Neve Dekalim" settlement, west of Khan Yunis, opened fire at houses in the al-Nimsawi neighbourhood and Khan Yunis refugee camp. A number of live

bullets hit the Nasser Hospital, nearly 700 meters away from the settlement, injuring a member of its staff, Ra'fat 'Abdullah 'Eissa, 39, with shrapnel to the neck.

- At approximately 11:45, on 1 August 2004, IOF positioned in military posts in the vicinity of "Neve Dekalim" settlement, west of Khan Yunis, opened fire at residential areas and civilian facilities in the town. Live bullets hit the Nasser Hospital. A member of its staff, Ibrahim Jalal Wadi, 46, was wounded by a live bullet to the left shoulder, and the patients and staff were terrified.
- At approximately 09.00, on 24 August 2004, IOF moved into Bethlehem. They surrounded the al-A'ela al Mukadasa (The French) Hospital and closed all entrances to the area. They entered the main square and detonated sound bombs. Dozens of soldiers entered the hospital and began to raid offices and beds. They searched the whole building and after three hours they withdrew and arrested two Palestinian civilians 'Adnan and Ratib 'Ebayat, 32 and 29 respectively. They claimed that 'Adnan was the leader of the al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade in Bethlehem and had been wanted by IOF for four years.
- At approximately 10:15, on 14 September 2004, an ambulance from the Palestine Red Crescent Society was stopped by IOF near the Western Wall in Jerusalem. The ambulance was on its way back from "Gilo" checkpoint, after delivering a patient to another ambulance from Bethlehem at the checkpoint. IOF checked the identity cards of the medical crew for nearly half an hour. Then, an Israeli policeman ordered the medical crew to get out of the ambulance and sit away from it. IOF searched the ambulance and damaged its contents. Soon after, the policeman moved towards the medical crew and ordered them to sign two documents, one was a fine and the other was a statement saying that the ambulance had been untouched. The medical crew refused to sign the two documents.
- At approximately 10:00 on the same day, IOF positioned in military checkpoints along the Egyptian border, south of Rafah, opened fire at Palestinian residential areas in the town. A number of live bullets hit the Abu Yousef al-Najjar Hospital, 800 meters away from the border, and damaged it.
- At approximately 10:30, Israeli troops positioned in military posts in the vicinity of "Neve Dekalim" settlement, west of Khan Yunis, shelled Palestinian residential areas and civilian facilities to the east and north. Two Palestinian civilians were wounded. An artillery shell also hit the physiotherapy department at Nasser Hospital, causing severe damage. Patients and medical crews were terrified during the attack.
- At approximately 12:15, IOF positioned in military posts in the vicinity of "Neve Dekalim" settlement, west of Khan Yunis, opened fire at a number of Palestinian children who gathered near the settlement and threw stones at the troops. Two

children were wounded. A number of live bullets and some shrapnel hit Nasser medical compound, damaging a number of its departments and an ambulance.

- At approximately 22:30, IOF positioned in military posts in the vicinity of "Neve Dekalim" settlement, west of Khan Yunis, shelled Palestinian houses in Khan Yunis refugee camp and al-Nimsawi neighborhood. A number of houses were damaged and an artillery shell fell near the administration building in Nasser medical compound, and damaged the building.
- At approximately 20:00, IOF positioned in military posts in the vicinity of "Neve Dekalim" settlement, west of Khan Yunis, opened fire at Palestinian houses in al-Nimsawi neighborhood and Khan Yunis refugee camp. A number of live bullets hit the building of Nasser Hospital, located nearly 700 meters away from the settlement. A Palestinian civilian, Munther Ma'moun al-Batash, 26, who was receiving medical treatment following a car accident, was injured by a live bullet to the head.

Violation of the Right of Medical Units and Transports to Free Movement

IOF have imposed a total siege on the OPT since the beginning of the current Intifada in September 2000, severely restricting the freedom of movement of persons and goods. Palestinian medical crews have faced extreme difficulties in attending the wounded and patients. They have also been subject to severe restrictions in access to hospitals, clinics and medical centres, due to Israeli military checkpoints erected throughout the OPT. The Israeli closure measures have left serious impacts on the health conditions of the Palestinian civilian population. According to PCHR's documentation, 68 Palestinian civilians died, as a result of IOF positioned at various checkpoints obstructing their access to medical care. Many pregnant women have also been forced to give childbirth at Israeli military checkpoints.

Israeli Military Checkpoints Interrupt Activities of Local Hospitals in the Gaza Strip

Israeli military checkpoints, located on the main roads in the Gaza Strip, have obstructed activities of local hospitals and the freedom of movement of medical vehicles. For instance, al-Matahen and Abu Houli checkpoints, north of Khan Yunis, separate the southern and central Gaza Strip, and al-Shuhada checkpoint, south of Gaza City, separates the central and northern Gaza Strip. There are 15 hospitals in the Gaza Strip, the largest of which are Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, Gaza European Hospital and Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis. The other hospitals are relatively small and largely dependent on the three main hospitals, making them vulnerable when Israeli military checkpoints

are closed. During the Israeli wide-scale offensive on Rafah in May 2004, IOF isolated the town from its surroundings, which threatened the health of Palestinian civilians living in the town.

On 16 May 2004, Dr. Mohammed Abu Shahla, Director of Gaza European Hospital, stated:

"The closure of the main roads that link between the south and north of the Gaza Strip impacted the activities of Gaza European Hospital in Khan Yunis, which serves thousands of Palestinians in Khan Yunis and Rafah. Many staff members of the hospital were not able to reach the hospital. We were also not able to bring certain medicines and equipment that we receive from Gaza on a daily basis. Transfer of patients who are in serious condition to Shifa Hospital in Gaza City was also impacted. Many of our staff members were not able to have holidays, as staff members of the hospital living in the north were not able to reach the hospital. A number of doctors were forced to treat patients, whose conditions were outside their areas of expertise. For instance, on Friday, 14 May 2004, we were forced to make a doctor perform heart surgery on a man who was wounded by IOF, even though such cases are usually transferred to Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. In the past days, there was a need to transfer 7 cases to Shifa Hospital, but we were not able to transfer them due to the closure of roads and so we were forced to treat them."

On 12 May 2005, Dr. Ali Mousa, Director of Abu Yousef al-Najjar Hospital in Rafah, stated:

"As IOF closed al-Matahen and Abu Houli checkpoints on Salah al-Din Street, which links between the north and south of the Gaza Strip, ambulances of our hospital were not able to travel to Shifa Hospital in Gaza City to transfer serious cases. Medical crews are subject to humiliation by IOF at military checkpoints. They are held for several hours and are sometimes checked by IOF. With regard to medical supplies, the Palestinian Ministry of Health provides us with medical supplies that suffice for three months, but that does mean that a shortage does not emerge due to the high numbers of the wounded treated at the hospital. When IOF close Salah al-Din Street, the health conditions of the wounded are seriously impacted."

IOF have continued to violate the right of Palestinian medical personnel to freedom of movement. They have obstructed the passage of many ambulances that have attempted to evacuate the wounded. IOF have escalated restrictions on movement of Palestinian medical personnel, threatening the lives of many Palestinian civilians, including the wounded, sick, pregnant women and children.

IOF have maintained a strict siege on the OPT, violating both economic, social and cultural rights, and civil and political rights of the Palestinian civilian population. They have isolated Jerusalem from the rest of the OPT, and separated the West Bank and Gaza

Strip, transforming the two areas into two large detention centres. This has had disastrous impacts on the living conditions of Palestinians and the basic services provided to them.

Under the Israeli full-scale offensive on the West Bank in spring 2002, the health situation further deteriorated, as Palestinian medical personnel faced extreme difficulties in evacuating the wounded and patients to hospitals. The health conditions of patients suffering from chronic diseases, such as diabetes, cancer and heart diseases, deteriorated, due to the lack of medicines and appropriate medical care, as IOF tightened the siege imposed on Palestinian communities, in violation of Palestinian economic, social and cultural rights. Palestinian medical personnel were not able to provide medical services to Palestinian civilians or the wounded. The international community has failed to force Israel to abide by the principles of international humanitarian law. Due to the Israeli comprehensive siege, dozens of Palestinian hospitals and medical centres lost more than 60% of their treatment capacity.

PCHR has documented a number of cases, in which IOF restricted the movement of Palestinian medical crews:

- On 30 October 2003, 3 ambulances from the Palestinian Union of Medical Relief Committees were thoroughly searched by Israeli soldiers at Hawara and Za'tara checkpoints, south of Nablus. Two of the ambulances were transporting medicines and medical equipment, while the third was evacuating a pregnant woman to a hospital in Nablus.

According to investigations conducted by PCHR, at approximately 09:00, two of the ambulances moved from Ramallah towards Nablus and Jenin. They were transporting medicines and medical equipment to two medical centres. At approximately 10:00, the ambulances arrived at Za'tara checkpoint, south of Nablus and were stopped and thoroughly searched by Israeli soldiers, during which time medicines and medical equipment were damaged. Approximately half an hour later, Israeli soldiers at Hawara checkpoint, south of Nablus, stopped another ambulance of the Palestinian Union of Medical Relief Committees, which was transporting a pregnant woman, Hanan Khalil Malek, 30, from Beeta village to Rafidya Hospital in Nablus, as she was suffering from acute haemorrhaging. Israeli soldiers searched the ambulance and made it wait for more than two hours, during which time the patient's condition deteriorated.

- At approximately 08:10 on 2 November 2003, Israeli soldiers at Hawara checkpoint, south of Nablus, stopped and searched an ambulance from the Palestinian Union of Medical Relief Committees that was travelling from Nablus to 'Assira village, south of the city. Approximately two hours later, they forced the ambulance to travel back, informing the medical personnel that the checkpoint was closed.

- Also on 2 November 2003, Israeli soldiers at Beit 'Eiba checkpoint, west of Nablus, stopped and searched an ambulance of the Palestinian Union of Medical Relief Committees that was travelling from Nablus to 'Azzoun and Habla villages in Qalqilya. Approximately 2 hours later, they forced the ambulance to travel back, informing the medical personnel that the checkpoint was closed.
- In the evening of 26 November 2003, IOF shot a Palestinian child in Yatta village, south of Hebron. They also obstructed his evacuation to the hospital, where he died the following morning. Another Palestinian was wounded and a third was arrested.

According to investigations conducted by PCHR, at approximately 19:50, an armoured personnel carrier and 12 military jeeps, accompanied by 2 civilian cars carrying several Israeli undercover units, moved into al-Musalla area in the centre of Yatta village, south of Hebron. IOF then began to open fire at houses in the area. As a result, two Palestinian civilians, including a child, were wounded:

1. Rashad Tawfiq 'Abdul Rahman Mur, 16, seriously wounded by a live bullet to the abdomen, died the following morning; and
2. Mousa Ahmed Mahmoud Abu 'Ali, 28, wounded by two live bullets to the pelvis and the left hand.

According to eyewitnesses, Israeli soldiers got out of a military jeep, and began to open fire at Mur from a distance of approximately 30 meters. Ambulances were not able to attend to the wounded due to the intense Israeli gunfire. Mur was evacuated in a civilian car to a clinic in the village, where he received first aid treatment. An ambulance then transferred him to al-Ahli Hospital in Hebron. He arrived at the hospital in a critical condition. His evacuation to the hospital took more than two hours due to the intense gunfire from Israeli occupying forces. A few hours later, Mur was transferred to Ramallah Hospital. However, he was pronounced dead at approximately 07:00 the following day. According to medical sources, the child had been hit by an exploding bullet and died of an acute haemorrhage.

- On 4 and 5 December 2003, IOF positioned at Beit Eiba checkpoint, west of Nablus, denied passage for Palestinian medical personnel and ambulances to nearby villages, claiming that according to the law, an ambulance can move with a patient, one physician and one medic only. The villages near Nablus lack medical personnel. As a result, medical personnel have to be sent into the villages from Nablus. According to these medical personnel, Israeli soldiers want them to exit the ambulances and then cross the military checkpoints on foot before re-entering the ambulances on the other sides of checkpoints. Considering the long delays imposed on civilians that cross the checkpoints on foot and the large amount of checkpoints that exist, this policy causes the ambulances to be delayed for several hours. As a result, such a policy seriously endangers the lives of all patients in the villages who may potentially need emergency medical attention.

- On Monday morning, 22 December 2003, Israeli soldiers at Deir Ballout military checkpoint, east of Qalqilya, and at al-Lubban checkpoint, northwest of Ramallah, denied passage of a Palestinian woman, who was 7 months pregnant and was in labour, claiming that she could not pass because she was travelling in a private car and not in an ambulance. The woman gave birth to twins, who died at the checkpoints.

According to PCHR's investigations, and an affidavit by Lamis Tayseer Ibrahim Qassem, 26, from Deir Ballout village, at approximately 01:30, she felt labour pains. Immediately, her husband called for an ambulance from Beit Rima village. He asked medical personnel to meet him and his wife near Deir Ballout checkpoint in order to save time. Then, he took his wife in his private car towards the checkpoint. At approximately 02:00, they arrived at the checkpoint and an ambulance was waiting at the other side of the checkpoint. However, Israeli soldiers denied passage for the medical personnel to take the woman to the ambulance. At approximately 03:30, Israeli soldiers finally agreed to allow the medical personnel to go to the woman. Soon, the woman gave birth to a dead baby. Then, Israeli soldiers allowed the ambulance to take the woman and travel towards Ramallah. On the way to Ramallah, Israeli soldiers at al-Lubban military checkpoint stopped and searched the ambulance. There, the woman gave birth to another dead baby.

- At approximately 17:00, on 20 August 2004, IOF stopped an ambulance from the Palestine Red Crescent Society at the entrance of al-'Eizariya village near Jerusalem. The ambulance was travelling from Ramallah to al-'Eizariya village. IOF searched the ambulance, confiscated all communication sets and damaged its contents. Nearly an hour later, they allowed the ambulance to move.

Disastrous Health Impacts on Palestinian Civilians during Wide Scale Offensives

During wide-scale offensives on Palestinian communities, IOF used various means of aggression against Palestinian medical crews in the field, to prevent them from evacuating patients and the wounded to hospitals and removing dead bodies. As a result, the health conditions of many of those in need of urgent medical attention deteriorated and a number of people died.

Rafah

On 13 May 2004, IOF initiated a wide scale offensive on the southern Gaza Strip town and refugee camp of Rafah, during which they committed a series of serious violations of human rights. During this offensive, IOF launched a series of attacks on Palestinian ambulances and medical crews, in an attempt to prevent them from evacuating the wounded to hospital and removing the bodies of those who had been killed on the street.

A number of the wounded remained bleeding for several hours without ambulances being able to attend them and they died as a result. Television screens around the world showed an UNRWA paramedic being shot at by IOF, while he was trying to evacuate a Palestinian gunman, who was seriously wounded by IOF in the Tal al-Sultan neighbourhood on Tuesday morning, 18 May 2004. The paramedic survived, but the UNRWA ambulance was damaged.¹⁰

IOF also held a number of ambulances for several hours and imposed severe restrictions on the movement of others, in violation of international humanitarian law, which ensures freedom of movement of medical crews and vehicles. A number of ambulances were damaged.

Palestinian and international medical organizations expressed grave concerns regarding the health conditions in Rafah during this wide scale offensive, as IOF launched a series of attacks on ambulances and medical crews. There were also serious concerns about the lives of patients, children and pregnant women in the affected areas, as IOF attacked and imposed severe restrictions on the movement of ambulances and medical crews.

During this offensive, IOF perpetrated a series of serious violations of international humanitarian law. They used excessive and disproportionate force. Apparently, Israeli soldiers were instructed to attack ambulances and medical crews. This fact can be proved by the Israeli Defence Minister's accusations that a number of ambulances had been participating in military operations.¹¹

No investigation was conducted into any single attacks against Palestinian ambulances or medical crews, even though they were clear violations of international humanitarian law and some of them were shown on television screens around the world.

The following are a number of the most significant attacks by IOF against Palestinian ambulances and medical crews during the wide scale offensive on Rafah:

¹⁰For more details, see the paramedic's testimony below.

¹¹ On 25 May 2004, Peter Hansen, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) demanded an apology and retraction from the Israeli Government and Military for the damaging and unfounded allegations they made against UNRWA's ambulance drivers in the Gaza Strip. On 14 May 2004, Shaul Mofaz, the Israeli Minister of Defence alleged that a UN ambulance had transported parts of Israeli soldiers. In a letter dated 16 May (but only faxed to UNRWA on 24 May), Major General Yossef Mishlev, Israel's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), claimed that a video tape showed Palestinian use on 11 May " ...of ambulances belonging to UNRWA, apparently for the purpose of transporting body parts..." In letters to the Israeli Minister of Defence and to General Mishlev, Mr. Hansen stated that despite repeated requests from UNRWA, no evidence of UNRWA ambulance drivers transporting the body parts of Israeli soldiers had been presented by the Government of Israel. Accordingly, he had no reason to believe that there is any truth at all to the extremely unfortunate accusation being made against UNRWA. See, UNRWA, Press Release No. HQ/G/15/2004, 25 May 2004.

- An UNRWA nurse, who accompanied an UNRWA ambulance into the Tal al-Sultan neighbourhood, described to PCHR's field worker in Rafah how he survived Israeli gunfire, while he was attempting to evacuate a wounded man:

"At approximately 04:00 on Tuesday, 18 May 2004, a physician and I travelled in an UNRWA ambulance to Tal al-Sultan neighbourhood after we had received information that a number of people were wounded as a result of an Israeli air strike. We were able to evacuate four of the wounded to Abu Yousef al-Najjar Hospital. At approximately 04:45, we were informed that two people were wounded in Bader camp in the Tal al-Sultan neighbourhood, one of them was inside a house whilst the other was on the street. Immediately, we went to the area. We asked a resident of the area and he told us that he had been hearing the cries of a person in severe pain for several hours. He walked near the ambulance to guide us. We moved a few meters and we could see a young man lying on the ground. The ambulance was fired at, but we were not hurt. The driver moved forward until we were about five meters away from the young man. In the meantime, shooting at us intensified, so the driver was forced to travel back and take shelter. We called the director of the UNRWA clinic in Rafah and he asked us to protect ourselves. We also called the director of UNRWA radio operations and he asked us to protect ourselves as much as possible. Then, we called the Palestine Red Crescent Society to help us. Actually, they sent four ambulances to the area. The ambulances were accompanied by a Reuters vehicle. We all moved in a convoy with lights turned on. However, we were fired at, so we were forced to retreat. We got out of the vehicles and took shelter behind walls. We were able to enter a house belonging to the Barhoum family, where we succeeded in evacuating a young man who had already been wounded in the abdomen. Israeli soldiers continued to fire at us from a neighbouring house. It was 05:00, and we moved the young man to an ambulance from the Palestine Red Crescent Society. The other young man was still on the ground and we were only five meters away from him. I took position between two ambulances and moved towards the young man. I came to about two meters away from him, but Israeli soldiers fired at me intensively, so I retreated. The young man was holding a gun and was wearing a green shirt and blue trousers. He was motionless. Soon, I decided to attempt again to pull him. I was able to catch his leg and pull him, but Israeli soldiers fired at us. He was hit by at least 10 bullets. One of the bullet hit him in the leg that I caught. I felt a live bullet passing near my face, so I retreated. I noticed that Israeli soldiers were attempting to hit the young man's gun to hurt me and my colleagues. I attempted again to pull him and I was able to bring him between two ambulances. His gun remained in the place. We carried him into one of the ambulances. We checked him and we discovered that he was dead. We transported his body to Abu Yousef al-Najjar Hospital. There, he was identified by people as Ziad Shabana. Our ambulance was hit by a number of live bullets."¹²

¹² The nurse's name is kept confidential upon his request.

- IOF attacked an ambulance of the Palestinian Ministry of Health in al-Brazil neighbourhood. Israeli bulldozers covered the ambulance with ruins of destroyed houses and tanks hit it. In his testimony to PCHR on this attack, a member of the medical crew said:¹³

"At approximately 12:00, on Thursday, 20 May 2004, we went to al-Brazil neighbourhood to evacuate a woman and her three children who were injured and were inside a house. When we arrived at the area, I saw a number of Israeli military vehicles positioned in the area. We stopped approximately 50 meters away from the house where the woman and the three children were present. The driver pressed the horn to call residents of the house to bring the wounded out, as we were not able to move closer to the house due to the presence of Israeli military vehicles. No one got out of the house. The driver was talking on the phone with the coordination official of the Ministry of Health informing him about the situation. The official asked us to wait until IOF allow us to move forward. However, five minutes later, the Israeli tanks fired at us. The ambulance was not damaged, but we were forced to move 20 meters back. A few minutes later, I saw a bulldozer and a tank coming towards us. I also saw another tank and bulldozer behind us. We were then surrounded by tanks and bulldozers. One of the bulldozers started to place sand barriers in front of the ambulance, while the other bulldozer was demolishing houses and putting the ruins behind the ambulance. We became surrounded by hills of sand and ruins. Soon, one of the bulldozers hit electricity towers and they fell onto the ambulance. In the meantime, the other bulldozer was putting more sand and ruins in front of the ambulance. My colleagues and I were trapped in the ambulance. Whenever we tried to open the doors, Israeli tanks fired at us. We were terrified as we felt that they would kill us. We informed the coordination official about these developments. We remained in this situation for three hours. At approximately 15:00, the coordination official informed us that we could leave the area. Then, the bulldozers started to remove sand barriers, and then we heard the driver of one of the bulldozers calling on us to leave the area. The driver tried to move forward, but he could not due to the large amounts of sand on the road. He tried several times to move, but he could not. I pointed to the driver of one of the bulldozers to push us and he did. We immediately travelled towards Abu Yousef al-Najjar Hospital. The ambulance was severely damaged, and the women and the children remained in the house all that time."

- IOF imposed severe restrictions on the movement of ambulances. PCHR has documented at least 50 cases in which IOF restricted access of ambulances to the wounded. In one of these cases, IOF held three ambulances in Tal al-Sultan neighbourhood for more than 15 hours. In his testimony to PCHR on this case, 'Adnan Ahmed Mustafa al-Nawajha, 33, an ambulance driver from Abu Yousef al-Najjar Hospital in Rafah, said:

¹³ His name is kept confidential upon his request.

"At approximately 05:00 on Tuesday, 18 May 2004, we moved into ambulances towards the Tal al-Sultan neighbourhood as we were informed that a number of people were wounded as a result of Israeli shelling near Bilal Ben Rabah Mosque. We evacuated a number of these people to the hospital. We went back to the area to evacuate more people. As soon as we arrived at al-Quds Street, which leads to the mosque, Israeli tanks and bulldozers intercepted us. I turned around and entered Tal al-Sultan public clinic in the area. Another ambulance followed me. A third ambulance from the Palestine Red Crescent Society was not able to enter the clinic, so its medical crew left it and took shelter in a neighbouring house. We all entered a room, where an emergency medical crew was working. We were 12 individuals in the room. We saw the Israeli tanks destroying the street. We contacted the Palestinian liaison and the ICRC to intervene to allow us to get out of the clinic, but nothing happened. At approximately 07:00, an Israeli bulldozer demolished the fence of the clinic. At approximately 16:00, the Palestinian liaison informed us that we were allowed to exit. As soon as we travelled in the ambulances, an Israeli tank fired a shell at us, but we were not hurt. We moved back to the clinic terrified. At approximately 20:00, we were informed by the Palestinian liaison that we were allowed to exit and that IOF were threatening to attack us if we remained inside the clinic. We got out on foot according to the instructions towards the street, where an ambulance was waiting for us. Then, we travelled back to the centre of the town."

- In his testimony to PCHR about the difficulties that were encountered by medical personnel during the IOF offensive on Rafah, a volunteer paramedic said:

"At approximately 17:00 on Thursday, 20 May 2004, I started my work in evacuating the wounded to hospitals and removing bodies of those who were killed in the affected areas. At night, we went to the al-Brazil neighbourhood as we were informed that our entrance into the area to remove three bodies had been coordinated with the Israeli side. When we arrived at the area, an Israeli tank opened fire at us. We were in six ambulances. We were forced to move back. Ten minutes later, the Ministry of Health informed us that we would be allowed to enter the area as our entry was coordinated with the Israeli side. Israeli military bulldozers were demolishing houses. We were not able to reach the bodies as an Israeli tank closed the road. We informed the Ministry of Health. Five minutes later, the tank moved towards a neighbouring house and we were able to reach the bodies. The victims were in their 20s and they were hit by several live bullets throughout the body. We evacuated them to Abu Yousef al-Najjar Hospital."

- **A Vegetable Fridge Used to Keep Bodies of the Dead!**

In the first days of the "Operation Rainbow" in Rafah, families of the victims were not able to bury them due to the total siege imposed on the town and the curfews imposed on a number of its neighbourhoods. At least 40 Palestinians were killed and more than 110 others were wounded in the first days of the operation in the Tal al-

Sultan and al-Brazil neighbourhoods. On the first day of the operation in Tal al-Sultan, 22 Palestinians were killed and their families were not able to bury them due to the curfew imposed by IOF on the neighbourhood. These high numbers were over the capacity of the small Abu Yousef al-Najjar Hospital, so the administration of the hospital was forced to transfer these bodies to a vegetable fridge belonging to a Palestinian civilian living near the hospital. In the first days of the operation, only two bodies were buried.

- **56 Babies Born under Severe Circumstances**

Due to the huge numbers of the dead and wounded evacuated to Abu Yousef al-Najjar Hospital, the administration of the hospital was forced to treat patients and perform childbirth operations in neighbouring houses. A house was used as a maternity ward, as the hospital lacks such a department. Eleven physicians, 11 nurses and a number of volunteers worked on infant deliveries. According to information available to PCHR, 56 babies (50 males and 6 females) were born during this time. Abu Yousef al-Najjar Hospital performed 15 Caesarean operations, despite the limited resources. Women were forced to leave following childbirth due to the lack of beds, as only three beds were available.

Beit Hanoun

During the wide scale offensive on Beit Hanoun in Summer 2004, IOF obstructed the work of Palestinian medical crews although their movement in the area was often coordinated in advance between the Palestinian Ministry of Health and IOF.

Describing the difficulties encountered by Palestinian medical crews during the Israeli offensive on Beit Hanoun, Naji Ibrahim Abu Namous, an ambulance driver, said:

"We evacuated 31 pregnant women who were in labour to al-'Awda Hospital in Jabalya and Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. Although the transportation of these women was coordinated in advance, IOF intentionally obstructed their evacuation to hospitals. They conducted prolonged checking of ambulances, which sometimes exceeded two hours, and provoked medical crews. The same was also applied to patients."

IOF also fired at a number of ambulances. In his testimony to PCHR describing a number of these cases, Ziad 'Abdul Dayem, an ambulance driver, said:

"We were responsible for the evacuation of the wounded and patients from Beit Hanoun Farm, although it was extremely dangerous as IOF fired at ambulances in the area. Nevertheless, we were able to evacuate them to Kamal 'Edwan Hospital in Beit Lahia. In some cases, coordination for the evacuation of patients took several hours. IOF also fired at a number of ambulances. On 25 July 2004, a wounded Palestinian was brought to Beit Hanoun Clinic. He was in a critical condition, so there was a need to transfer

him to Kamal 'Edwan Hospital in Beit Lahia. We contacted the Ministry of Health in order to coordinate our movement. Nearly 15 minutes later, the Ministry instructed me to move. We took the wounded man into the ambulance and travelled through the agricultural road, but Israeli tanks forced us to travel back. We resorted to a dirt road, which leads to Erez crossing. When we arrived at a branch road that leads to Salah al-Din Street, an Israeli tank stopped us. Israeli soldiers ordered the medical crew to get out of the ambulance and inform civilians in the area to move their cars away. They also threatened to shoot anyone who may come into the road or leave it. Although Israeli soldiers knew that the wounded man was in a serious condition, they obstructed our passage. Nearly 45 minutes later, I contacted the Ministry of Health and claimed that the wounded man had died, in an attempt to ensure faster passage. Then, Israeli soldiers ordered the ambulance driver to move the back of the ambulance towards the back of the tank and open the back door. As soon as the door was opened, an Israeli soldier pointed his gun at the wounded man. Immediately, I closed the door. Israeli soldiers ordered us to turn off our mobile phones. They also insulted the ambulance officer and ordered him to move towards the tank. I thought that they would kill him. The Israeli soldiers also ordered the physician and the nurse to get out of the ambulance, but I refused to make them get out and contacted the Ministry of Health again. I informed the Ministry that I would leave the area at my responsibility. Israeli soldiers fired near the feet of the ambulance officer to terrify him. Soon, I saw an ambulance and a jeep of UNRWA coming from the direction of Erez crossing. I stopped them. Israeli soldiers realized that they would not be able to do anything, so they allowed us to leave the area. It took us nearly two hours to transport the wounded man to Kamal 'Edwan Hospital."

IOF also attacked clinics and medical centres, endangering medical crews. In his testimony to PCHR on one of these attacks, Khaled Mustafa al-Za'anin, a physician at Beit Hanoun Clinic, said:

"On 25 July 2004, IOF fired at the clinic. A Palestinian civilian was wounded by a live bullet to the chest. We offered him first medical aid and then transferred him to Kamal 'Edwan Hospital in Beit Lahia. Soon, IOF positioned in a neighbouring house fired at the clinic again. We were forced to lie on the ground or take shelter behind walls."

At approximately 01:30, on 8 July 2004, an infantry unit of IOF moved into al-Na'aima Street in Beit Hanoun. Israeli soldiers surrounded a house belonging to the family of Nahid 'Abdul Rahman 'Abed Abu 'Ouda, 44, who was allegedly wanted. They exchanged fire with him and shot him dead. They held his body in a Palestinian ambulance and did not allow the ambulance to move until the afternoon. IOF also prevented ambulances from entering the area.

Illegal Acts

International human rights and humanitarian law provides for the free movement of persons. Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that

“everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state...”. Article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides that *“everyone... shall have the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence...”*. Medical personnel should have the right to freedom of movement to ensure the access patients and wounded to appropriate medical care.

Article 21 of the *Fourth Geneva Convention* of 1949 provides:

“Convoys of vehicles or hospital trains on land or specially provided vessels on sea, conveying wounded and sick civilians, the infirm and maternity cases, shall be respected and protected in the same manner as the hospitals provided for in Article 18...”

Article 23 of the *Convention* of 1949 provides:

“Each High Contracting Party shall allow the free passage of all consignments of medical and hospital stores and objects necessary for religious worship intended only for civilians of another High Contracting Party, even if the latter is its adversary. It shall likewise permit the free passage of all consignments of essential foodstuffs, clothing and tonics intended for children under fifteen, expectant mothers and maternity cases...”

Since the beginning of the current Intifada, IOF have violated the right of Palestinian medical personnel to freedom of movement. They have obstructed the passage of many ambulances that have attempted to evacuate the wounded. Since February 2002, IOF have escalated restrictions on movement of Palestinian medical personnel, threatening the lives of many Palestinian civilians, including the wounded, sick, pregnant women and children.

IOF have attacked Palestinian ambulances and medical personnel, in violation of international humanitarian law. Dozens of ambulances have been fired at by IOF. These ambulances are clearly marked, as provided in Article 38 of the Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field of 1949.¹⁴

The ICRC demanded IOF to respect international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, and allow free movement for medical personnel. The ICRC also condemned Israeli attacks on its representatives and demanded Israeli occupying forces to allow the evacuation of the wounded and patients to hospitals. Efforts made by the ICRC to pressure IOF to allow entry of food and medicines into

¹⁴ Article 38 of the Convention provides: *As a compliment to Switzerland, the heraldic emblem of the red cross on a white ground, formed by reversing the Federal colours, is retained as the emblem and distinctive sign of the Medical Service of armed forces. Nevertheless, in the case of countries which already use as emblem, in place of the red cross, the red crescent or the red lion and sun on a white ground, those emblems are also recognized by the terms of the present Convention.*

Palestinian villages and refugee camps, which had been under Israeli military siege failed. As a result, the ICRC has been forced to cancel its humanitarian activities in some areas. In several statements, the ICRC expressed concern for the restrictions imposed by IOF on the movement of ambulances of the Palestine Red Crescent Society and the humanitarian mission of the ICRC in the OPT. The ICRC called on IOF to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law and respect medical missions.

Conclusion

In complete disregard for international humanitarian law, IOF have continued to attack Palestinian medical personnel and ambulances. They have not initiated any investigation in any single case that involved attacks by Israeli soldiers and settlers against Palestinian medical personnel and facilities. A number of medical personnel have been killed and others have been wounded, while a number of medical centres have also been shelled.

PCHR condemns the international silence and inaction concerning violations perpetrated by IOF against humanitarian staff, including medical personnel, and the failure of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to hold Israel accountable for war crimes perpetrated by IOF against Palestinian civilians in the OPT. PCHR calls upon the international community to immediately intervene to put an end to such violations.

PCHR particularly calls for:

1. Taking immediate steps by the international community, through the UN Security Council, to put an end to grave violations perpetrated by IOF against Palestinian civilians, according to the conclusions and recommendations of the UN bodies that have conducted investigations.
2. Convening a conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to ensure Israel's respect for the Convention in the OPT.
3. Applying the 7th Chapter of the UN Charter on the Israeli occupying state to ensure international security and peace, and providing immediate international protection for the Palestinian people in the OPT.
4. Activating Article 2 of the Euro-Israeli Association Agreement by the EU, which provides that Israel must respect international human rights law and international humanitarian law.
5. Providing humanitarian and medical assistance for the Palestinian people, whose living conditions are continuing to deteriorate as a result of the continued siege imposed by IOF on the entire OPT.
6. Enhancing the presence of the ICRC to expand its activities and intensify its field observations throughout the OPT.
7. Pressuring Israel through the World Health Organization in order to put an end to Israeli violations against Palestinian medical personnel and facilities.

PCHR calls upon the international community to fulfil its moral, legal and political responsibilities, especially as the Palestinian Ministry of Health has warned of a health disaster in the OPT, due to the Israeli total siege imposed on Palestinian communities. PCHR calls upon the international community also to immediately intervene with regard to aggressive Israeli policies against the Palestinian people.

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Annexes

1) Medical Personnel Killed by Israeli Occupation Forces

No.	Name	Age	Place of Residence	Job	Date of Death	Causes of Death	Notes
1.	'Omar Sa'ad al-Din Hassan	21	Al-Zaitoun, Gaza	Nurse	5 Feb. 2003	Live bullets	An Israeli soldier shot dead two nurses in al-Wafaa' hospital in the north east of Gaza City.
2.	'Abdul Karim Hamed Anwar Lubbad	22	Jabalya	Nurse	5 Feb. 2003	Live bullets	An Israeli soldier shot dead two nurses in al-Wafaa' hospital in the north east of Gaza City.
3.	Naji Iama'il Abu Jalila	35	Jabalya	A fireman	6 Mar. 2003	Shrapnel from a shell	IOF fired an artillery shell at a number of Palestinian civilians and firemen who were attempting to put out a fire that broke out in a building.
4.	Zain al-'Aabedin Shahin	35	Nussirat	A physician	22 Oct. 2003	Shrapnel from a missile	Two Israeli helicopter gunships fired a missile at a civilian car in Nusairat refugee camp, but the passengers were able to escape. Soon, a number of civilians gathered in the area and an Israeli helicopter gunship fired another missile at them. Seven civilians were killed, including Dr. Shahin who came to the area to provide medical aid for the wounded.

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Palestinians Who Died As a Result of the Total Siege Imposed by IOF on the OPT Since the Beginning of the al-Aqsa Intifada

No.	Name	Age	Place of Residence	Date of Death	Details
1.	Nazir Nayef al-Haj Hussein	23	Jamma'in, Salfit	11 Oct. 2000	He was seriously injured when he fell from a tractor. Due to the existence of Hawara military checkpoint, south of Nablus, his family was forced to resort to a dirt road to take him to a hospital in Nablus. He died on the way to the hospital.
2.	Na'im 'Atallah Ahmed	37	Al-Zawia, Salfit	13 Oct. 2000	He died as IOF prevented him from travelling to a hospital in Nablus, where he used to receive regular medical treatment for a kidneys condition.
3.	Alaa' Ussama 'Abdul 'Aziz	10	Al-Sawia, Nablus	14 Oct. 2000	IOF positioned at Yatma and Hawara military checkpoints denied her passage to a hospital in Nablus for two days. She died from the acute pains in the abdomen, which she was suffering from.
4.	Riad Yousef 'Awad	26	Yatta, Hebron	29 Oct. 2000	He died when IOF obstructed his transfer in an ambulance from Jordan to the West Bank through al-Karama International Crossing Point on the Jordanian border.
5.	Jamal Ibrahim 'Olwan	34	Senjel, Ramallah	14 Nov. 2000	IOF prevented him from travelling to Ramallah to receive medical treatment as he was suffering from a heart problem.
6.	'Eisha Naji Nassar	28	Al-Jania, Ramallah	23 Jan. 2001	IOF positioned at a checkpoint obstructed her passage to Ramallah to receive medical treatment. She was suffering from side effects from a caesarean operation she had undergone nearly one month earlier.
7.	Hassan Suleiman Daraghma	66	Al-Lubban, Nablus	27 Jan. 2001	IOF positioned at Hawara checkpoint, south of Nablus, obstructed his passage to the city to receive medical treatment. He suffered from difficulties in breathing. His family was forced to transport him through a dirt road, but he died.

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8.	Falah Saleh 'Ayash	67	Rafat, Nablus	30 Jan. 2001	IOF positioned at a military checkpoint near Qalqilya obstructed his passage for at least 30 minutes.
9.	Khadra Rajab Eshtaiwi	65	Kufor Qaddoum, Qalqilya	5 Feb. 2001	IOF positioned at various checkpoints near Nablus obstructed her passage to the city for several hours. He was suffering from pains in the chest.
10.	'Abdul Rahman Mahmoud Joma'a	76	Beit Leed, Tulkarm	16 Feb. 2000	IOF positioned at al-Kafriyat checkpoint, south of Tulkarm, obstructed his passage for more than an hour. He was suffering from acute pains in the chest.
11.	Na'im 'Abed Bani Jame'	39	'Aqraba, Nablus	13 Mar. 2001	IOF positioned at Hawara checkpoint, south of Nablus, obstructed his passage to the city to receive medical treatment for at least 40 minutes. He was suffering from pains in the chest and had difficulties in breathing.
12.	Ameera Nasser Abu Saif	48	Taqqou'a, Nablus	14 Mar. 2001	IOF positioned at al-Jalama checkpoint, north of Jenin, obstructed her passage for at least three and a half hours. She was suffering from diabetes.
13.	Kifah Khaled Zo'rob	17	Khan Yunis	10 May 2001	IOF positioned at checkpoints in al-Mawasi area, west of Khan Yunis, and at al-Tuffah checkpoint at the entrance of the area, denied him passage to Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis for at least two and a half hours. He was suffering from acute pains in the abdomen.
14.	Bajes 'Abdul Hamid Nemer Eslaima	45	Ethna, Hebron	6 Jun. 2001	IOF, which had closed all the entrances to his village, prevented an ambulance from evacuating him to a hospital in Hebron. He was suffering from acute pains in the chest. The medical crew was forced to carry him and walk. He was dead when he arrived at the hospital.
15.	Sabri Amin Mahmoud	41	Al-Ras, Tulkarm	10 Jun. 2001	He was on his way to Nablus to receive regular medical treatment for his kidneys, but the road was closed. He resorted to a dirt road. He was brought to the hospital dead three hours later.

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16.	Fatema Mohammed al-'Abed al-Sherafai	64	Jabalya	30 Jun. 2001	She died at Rafah International Crossing Point, when she was on her way back to the Gaza Strip. She was forced to stay at the checkpoint for three days. She was suffering from a number of medical problems.
17.	Khaled 'Abdul Nasser Nouri Mousa	4 days		30 Jun. 2001	IOF obstructed his passage through checkpoints.
18.	Miriam Mohammed Ibrahim 'Amara	61	Nabi Saleh, Ramallah	30 Jun. 2001	IOF positioned at three checkpoints obstructed her passage for an hour and a half. She was being evacuated to the hospital, as she had suffered a heart attack.
19.	Saleh 'Abdul Rahman Haj Mohammed	50	Beit Fourik, Nablus	8 Jul. 2001	IOF positioned at a checkpoint at the entrance of his village obstructed his passage for 15 minutes. He was suffering a heart attack.
20.	Mohammed Hassan Khalifa	55	Faqqou'a, Jenin	10 Jul. 2001	IOF positioned at a military checkpoint to the east of Jenin obstructed his passage. He was suffering a heart attack.
21.	A baby born for Ferial Du'ais		Al-Malha, Jenin	10 Jul. 2001	The woman was forced to give birth near a checkpoint as IOF prevented her passage to the hospital. The baby died immediately.
22.	Nihad 'Abdul Jabbar Jaber	64	Hebron	23 Aug. 2001	IOF obstructed his travel to receive medical treatment.
23.	Umayya Hamdallah 'Omran Hussein	27	'Azzoun, Qalqilya	24 Sep. 2001	IOF positioned at various checkpoints between her village and Nablus obstructed her passage to Nablus to receive medical treatment. She was suffering from a haemorrhage following a childbirth.
24.	Rihab Mohammed Noufal	30	Housan, Bethlehem	19 Oct. 2001	IOF positioned at a military checkpoint at the entrance of her village obstructed her passage to the hospital for half an hour. She was in labour and in a serious condition.
25.	Mohammed Khairi 'Abdul Fattah al-Zeben	55	Kufor Rumman, Tulkarm	4 Nov. 2001	IOF positioned at a military checkpoint on the Nablus –Tulkarm road obstructed his passage to the hospital to receive regular treatment for a kidney condition.
26.	Sbri Mohammed Janem	71	Baqa al-Sharqiya, Tulkarm	7 Nov. 2001	IOF positioned at Deir Sharaf checkpoint, northwest of Nablus, obstructed his passage to the hospital to receive regular treatment for a kidney condition.

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27.	Sami Salim Basala	50	Rafah	21 Nov. 2001	IOF positioned at Tal al-Sultan checkpoint obstructed his passage to the hospital. He was suffering from pains in the chest.
28.	Mohammed Mahmoud Abu Data	46	Al-Zahiriya, Hebron	2 Dec. 2001	IOF positioned at a checkpoint on the al-Zahiriya – Hebron road obstructed his passage to the hospital. He was suffering from a heart problem.
29.	Naji 'Aabed	34	Qabatya, Jenin	3 Dec. 2001	IOF positioned at a checkpoint at the entrance of his village obstructed his passage to the hospital to receive regular treatment for his kidneys.
30.	Tamer Khaled Quzmar	8 months	'Ezbat al-Salman, Qalqilya	3 Dec. 2001	IOF positioned at Habla checkpoint, south of Qalqilya obstructed his passage to the hospital. He was suffering from acute pains in the chest.
31.	Ibrahim Hussein Abu Hassan	-	Al-Yamoun, Jenin	25 Dec. 2001	He was born in a private clinic in the village, but there was a need to transfer him to a hospital in Jenin. IOF obstructed his transfer to the hospital.
32.	Shadi Ahmed Lafi Musallam	25	Jabalya	9 Jan. 2002	He died at Rafah International Crossing Point, while he was on his way back to the Gaza Strip after having received medical treatment in Egypt from an injury he had sustained on 15 December 2001. There was a need to transfer him to Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, but IOF obstructed his transfer for several hours and he died.
33.	Kayed Sabri Sorouji	45	Tulkarm	6 Feb. 2002	IOF positioned at Deir Sharaf checkpoint, northwest of Nablus, prevented him from travelling back home after having received medical treatment for his kidneys at hospital in Nablus.
34.	Mohammed Zakin	-	Aal-Yamoun, Jenin	6 Feb. 2002	IOF positioned at a checkpoint at the entrance of his village denied him and his mother passage to Jenin Hospital.
35.	Ne'ma 'Abdul Rahman al-Sheikh Khalil	45	Rafah	13 Feb. 2002	She died at a temporary checkpoint erected by IOF to the west of "Netzarim" settlement, south of Gaza City, when she was travelling to Rafah.
36.	A newly born baby of Hanaa' Abu Zaid	-	Deir al-Balah	15 Feb. 2002	IOF positioned at a checkpoint at al-Shuhada' junction, south of Gaza City, denied him and his mother passage to Shifa Hospital in Gaza City.

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37.	Rana 'Aadel 'Abdul Rahim al-Jayousi	18	Kour, Qalqilya	9 Mar. 2002	IOF positioned at a checkpoint at the eastern entrance to Qalqilya denied her passage to a hospital in the town. She was in labour.
38.	Zubaida Farid Mahajna	49	Um al-Fahem	16 Mar. 2002	IOF positioned at al-Taibeh checkpoint near Tulkarm prevented her from travelling from Tulkarm to her town after she had visited her sister in Tulkarm.
39.	Jabber 'Abed al-Nabahin	50	Al-Boreij	2 Apr. 2002	IOF positioned at a checkpoint at al-Shuhada junction, south of Gaza City, denied him passage to Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. He was suffering from acute pains in the chest.
40.	A newly born baby of Halima al-Atrash	-	Al-Walaja, Bethlehem	3 Apr. 2002	The baby was born dead at an Israeli military checkpoint.
41.	A newly born baby of Tahani Sha'ar	-	Nablus	12 Apr. 2002	IOF prevented his evacuation to the hospital as he was suffering from difficulties in breathing. During this time, IOF were launching a wide scale offensive on Nablus.
42.	Tabarak Jaber 'Ouda	4	Deir al-Hatab, Nablus	17 Apr. 2002	She was suffering from cancer. She died at a checkpoint on the entrance of her village.
43.	Dina Nasser Eshtayeh	5 days	Nablus	18 Apr. 2002	She was being evacuated to the National Hospital in Nablus, as she was suffering from a heart problem. IOF positioned at a checkpoint on the entrance to Salem village obstructed her passage. When IOF allowed her passage, an Israeli tank obstructed her transfer to the hospital for 5 minutes.
44.	'Aa'asha 'Ali Hassan 'Eissa	21	Qebia, Ramallah	22 May 2002	IOF positioned at 'Ein 'Arik checkpoint denied her passage to a hospital in Ramallah to receive regular treatment for her a kidney condition.
45.	A newly born baby of Fadia Kamel Za'oul	-	Nahalin, Bethlhem	25 May 2002	IOF positioned at a checkpoint in the area denied the mother who was in labour passage to a hospital in Bethlehem for at least 20 minutes. Her husband called for an ambulance and when the ambulance arrived, IOF forced the mother to give birth inside the ambulance. Five minutes later, IOF allowed the ambulance to transport the mother and the baby, but the baby died soon after.

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46.	Mustafa 'Abdul Jawad al-Qarout Edkaik	64	Al-'Eizariya, Jerusalem	25 May 2002	While he was travelling from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, he became unconscious as he was waiting to be allowed to cross an Israeli military checkpoint. IOF obstructed his evacuation to the hospital for at least two hours and he died.
47.	Ghalia Ahmed Shalah	70	Rafah	29 May 2002	She died at Abu Houli checkpoint, south of Deir al-Balah, as she had suffered a heart attack.
48.	Yousef Mohammed 'Abdul Rahman Abu Tabikh	78	Jenin	9 Jun. 2002	He died at al-Hamra checkpoint in the northern Jordan Valley when he was on his way back home from Jordan after having received medical treatment for cancer.
49.	'Ouda Ya'qub 'Ouda Shehada	57	Bir Zeit, Ramallah	18 Jun. 2002	He had suffered a heart attack. IOF positioned at checkpoints between his village and Ramallah obstructed his passage for at least three hours.
50.	Zuhair Tawfiq 'Awad	60	Salfit, Nablus	10 Jul. 2002	He had suffered a heart attack. IOF positioned at Hawara checkpoint, south of Nablus, obstructed his passage for at least two hours.
51.	Madeline Median Younis Nasasra	9 months	Nablus	30 Jul. 2002	IOF positioned at a checkpoint near Nablus denied her passage to a hospital in Nablus.
52.	Rawan Murad 'Eissa Huraizat	3 days	Yatta, Hebron	23 Sep. 2002	IOF positioned at a checkpoint near Hebron obstructed her passage to a hospital in the town.
53.	Isma'il Khalil Salim Habboush	63	Gaza	20 Oct. 2002	He died when he was walking towards the car park at Erez crossing in the northern Gaza Strip, when he suffered a heart attack.
54.	Muneer Mithqal 'Allam	48	'Einabous, Nablus	21 Oct. 2002	IOF positioned at a checkpoint to the south of Nablus prevented the ambulance that was transporting him from entering Nablus.
55.	Khalil Ibrahim Hussein Ahmed	62	Jabalya	24 Oct. 2002	He died from a heart attack at Rafah International Crossing Point, when he was waiting to be allowed to travel back to the Gaza Strip.
56.	Hassan Shehada Qarqash	75	Al-'Eizariya, Jerusalem	2 Dec. 2002	He had suffered a heart attack, but his family was not able to evacuate him to the hospital as IOF closed all the entrances of his village with cement blocks.
57.	'Azzam 'Abdul Qader Hassan 'Alawna	45	'Azmout, Nablus	11 Dec. 2002	IOF obstructed his evacuation to the hospital while he was suffering a heart attack.

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58.	Hussein Mahmoud 'Abdul Hamid al-Tamimi	56	Nabi Saleh, Ramallah	29 Dec. 2002	IOF and settler obstructed his evacuation to the hospital. He was suffering a heart disease.
59.	A newly born baby of Tamam Kamal Shafiq 'Antari	-	Nablus	22 Feb. 2002	IOF positioned at Beit Eiba checkpoint, west of Nablu, obstructed his evacuation to thee hospital.
60.	Najwan Mohammed Sa'id Salhi	18	Nablus	2 Mar. 2003	She died as her health condition deteriorated when IOF positioned at various checkpoints on the Jericho-Nablus road obstructed her travel. She was on her way back home from Jordan.
61.	Mohammed Taher Mohammed Ahmed	57	Nazlat 'Eissa, Tulkarm	22 Jun. 2003	He had suffered a heart attack, but IOF did not allow ambulances to enter the village to evacuate him to a hospital in Tulkarm.
62.	Samah Ahmed Shahin	25	Hebron	29 Sep. 2003	She had suffered a heart attack while she was waiting at an Israeli military checkpoint near Halhoul. She was evacuated to the hospital late, as most of the roads were closed.
63.	Lamees Tayseer Ibrahim Qassem	26	Qalqilya	22 Dec. 2003	IOF positioned at Deir Ballout checkpoint prevented her evacuation to the hospital when she was in labour, because she was being transported in a private car instead of an ambulance. She gave birth to dead twins while she was waiting at the checkpoint.
64.	Su'ad Mohammed 'Ali al-Qurainawi	62	Rafah	13 Feb. 2004	She died at Rafah International Crossing Point as IOF forced her to wait for a long time. She was on her way back to the Gaza Strip from Egypt after having undergone surgery.
65.	Mohammed Ibrahim Sa'id al-Sheikh	41	Gaza	16 Feb. 2004	He suffocated due to the congestion at a route designated for Palestinian workers at Erez crossing in the northern Gaza Strip.
66.	Ahmed 'Abdul Rahim Nemer	46	Qoussin, Nablus	18 Apr. 2004	As he had waited at a checkpoint for a long time, he moved towards Israeli soldiers to discuss the delay with them. Soon, he fell to the ground, suffering a heart attack. Medical crews attempted to save his life but their attempts failed.
67.	Hassan Isma'il al-Mughrabi	2.5	Deir al-Balah	14 May 2004	He died at al-Mataheen checkpoint, north of Khan Yunis as IOF obstructed the passage of the ambulance that was transporting him.
68.	Fahmi 'Omar Mahdi	70	Nusairat	7 Aug. 2004	He died at Rafah International Crossing Point due to the congestion resulting from restrictions imposed by IOF.

Report on Israeli Attacks against Palestinian Medical Personnel
