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**Human rights situation in Palestine and other
occupied Arab territories**

Written statement* submitted by Institut International pour les Droits et le Développement, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[28 May 2021]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Escalating effects of the Israeli aggression on the Occupied Palestinian territories

We, The International Institute for Rights and Development (IRDG), express our concern and our strong condemnation of the escalating effects of the Israeli aggression on the Occupied Palestinian territories, especially the Gaza Strip. The international community must not remain silent about the complex and multiple crimes committed by the Israeli forces against the defenseless Palestinian people who are suffering from multiple crimes practiced against them since 1948. A just solution must be found, that would guarantee the Palestinians' enjoyment of their rights as recognized for them by international law on decisions for the Palestinian cause.

Mr. President, you have followed, as we all did, the Israeli military attacks on the Gaza Strip, in which dozens of civilians were killed. The victims were not guilty, and were facing a military force whose greatest concern is the loss of the largest number of victims. As many international human rights organizations have documented, up to this point, with more than 253 deaths, 66 of them were children, 39 were women, and as the rest, most of them were civilians. This in addition to the wounding of more than 1948 Palestinian citizens.

Mr. President, we are talking about a large number of victims who were killed within 10 days only, during which the Israeli army used its military aircraft and deadly weapons against residential buildings and civilian homes. Absolutely no necessity requires the use of this lethal force against women and children. Most of the victims have fallen due to the Israeli army and the use of its air force of missiles that were dropped on houses full of its inhabitants. These massacres led to the wiping of entire families from the civil registry, in front of the eyes and ears of the international community. This includes the massacre of Al-Wehda Street in the center of Gaza City where the family of "Abu Al-Auf" and "Al-Kulak" were almost completely killed.

We also note that Israel continues to use its methodology to deliberately target civilian homes and wipe out residential neighborhoods, as happened in previous military attacks, without any regard for the international humanitarian law rules, taking advantage of the inability of the international system to hold it accountable for its past violations, and its enjoyment of an open balance of impunity.

We affirm, here, that the Israeli attacks prove, beyond any doubt, the criminal mentality that the army possesses in its targeting of women and children, press offices, health headquarters, commercial centers and other civilian objects. Targets for which international humanitarian law has guaranteed special protection and the offense of any assault or violation would prejudice that protection.

Mr. President, it must be pointed out here that Article 25 of the Hague Regulations pertaining to the laws and customs of land war prohibits "attacking or bombing cities, villages, dwellings and unprotected buildings." Article (53) of the Fourth Geneva Convention also states that "The occupying power is prohibited from destroying any private property, unless the military operations inevitably require such destruction."

Destruction of property not justified by military necessities, and on a large scale, is a grave breach of the Convention under Article (147) thereof, and a war crime under the Statute of the International Criminal Court (Article 8 (2) (b) (2)).

Information published by many human rights organizations operating in the Gaza Strip indicates the damage to a large section of the electricity network components as a result of the continuous bombardment, most notably the stoppage of main feeder lines and other out of service due to the targeting of the electricity infrastructure in the Israeli raids. The only power station in the Gaza Strip is about to stop operating due to the closure of the commercial crossings, and the failure to enter the shipments of fuel needed to operate the station.

We emphasize here that stopping the work of the power plant and disrupting the supply lines will exacerbate the current crisis, and will have serious effects on the basic services

received by more than 2 million citizens living in the Gaza Strip, and will affect the access to water and sanitation services. The neighborhoods are suffering from interruptions for several days, especially since the bombing operations also caused the destruction of many water and sewage lines.

IRDG also expresses its deep concern about the Israeli army targeting and destroying a large number of economic and commercial facilities in the Gaza Strip during the 10-day-long military offensive, as the numbers indicated that the Israeli army attacks contributed to the destruction or severe damage of more than 525 economic establishments, including 50 factories, during the Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip.

In this context, we stress that the military attack caused direct negative repercussions on the entire economic sector through the bombing and destruction of facilities, and indirect effects related to the disruption that occurred due to the continuing Israeli attacks, as the policy of destroying and disrupting factories and economic establishments pushed thousands into widespread unemployment at an already high rate in The Gaza Strip, as its percentage in the Strip reaches about 49%, and among the youth and graduates it rises to more than 67%, as a result of the Israeli siege that has continued for nearly 15 years.
