

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in UK

المنظمة العربية لحقوق الإنسان في بريطانيا



Date: 11/04/2018

ICC Complaint Filed Against Israeli Forces for Using Lethal Force on Peaceful Demonstrators

2,721 Palestinians Killed Since June 2014, Including Women and Children

Over 39,000 Palestinians Injured During the Same Period

66 Palestinians Killed Since Trump's Jerusalem Declaration

Failure to Investigate Encourages More Crimes by Occupation Leaders, Complaint Warns

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK) has submitted a complaint to the Office of the Attorney General under Article 15/1 of the Rome Statute, which established the International Criminal Court. The complaint focuses on the intentional killing and use of lethal force against peaceful demonstrators in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

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According to international reports and field documentation, the organisation reported that from 13 June 2014, when the State of Palestine accepted the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court, until 6 April 2018, Israeli occupation forces killed at least 2,721 civilians and injured approximately 39,423 civilians, including women and children.

AOHR UK highlighted that since Trump announced on 6 December 2018 that Jerusalem was the capital of Israel, peaceful demonstrations erupted in the occupied territories. The occupation forces responded with lethal force, killing 66 and wounding hundreds. Among the fatalities were 32 Palestinians killed between 30 March 2018 and 6 April 2018 during the Great March of Return demonstrations on the Gaza Strip border.

In the complaint, AOHR UK explained that with every massacre committed by the occupation soldiers, the Israeli media justifies the killings with various pretexts. For example, they justify the killing of children by claiming attempted stabbings and justify killing demonstrators on the Gaza border by alleging they belong to armed organisations. However, the facts on the ground show no bullets were fired from the Palestinian side, and there were no casualties among the occupation soldiers stationed on the border.

AOHR UK confirmed that the Great March of Return, which began on 30 March, the anniversary of Land Day, and extends until 15 May, the

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anniversary of the Nakba, is a peaceful march where Palestinians affirm their inalienable rights to return and establish the Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

AOHR UK noted that the occupation forces used internationally banned bullets and tank shells against unarmed demonstrators. Journalists, people with special needs, children, and women were also targeted by sniper bullets.

In the complaint, AOHR UK emphasised that the allegation of using civilians as human shields, regardless of its source, aims to cover up the crimes of the occupation. There is no military battle between two parties to justify claims that Palestinians are being used as human shields. International law guarantees the right to demonstrate against oppression, and this demonstration is a clear manifestation of Palestinians exercising their rights in the face of Israeli occupation, with tens of thousands protesting to reaffirm their internationally guaranteed rights.

Despite international condemnation of the massacre in the first week, demands to avoid using lethal force, and the Israeli Prime Minister's statements praising the occupation forces' behaviour, no explicit instructions were issued to stop using live bullets. The occupation forces used lethal force again on 6 April 2018, killing at least ten people and wounding

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hundreds. Following the recent massacre, both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence insisted on giving soldiers the green light to use lethal force.

AOHR UK stressed that the actions of Israeli leaders and forces constitute crimes against humanity and war crimes under Articles Seven and Eight of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The systematic killing policy used by the occupation in all confrontations with Palestinians meets the gravity threshold, given the number of those killed during the court's jurisdiction period in the Palestinian territories and the use of prohibited bullets and shells. This behaviour clearly violates the Fourth Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Hague Regulations of 1907.

Since Palestine accepted the court's jurisdiction, the Prosecutor's Office has received many complaints about various crimes committed by the occupation forces in the occupied Palestinian territories. However, to date, the Prosecutor's Office has not opened any official investigations into the cases presented, making Israeli government and occupation leaders immune from punishment and encouraging them to commit more crimes.

AOHR UK stressed in the complaint that the failure to open an official and urgent investigation into the crimes committed by the Israeli government and occupation forces in the occupied territories sends a wrong message,

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encouraging Israeli soldiers and officers to continue committing more crimes. There is a fear that killings will escalate, as statements from military and political leaders confirm their determination to continue using lethal force.

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