



Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights

Field Work Unit

From the Field

Monthly Field Report on Israeli Violations of Human Rights in the Gaza Strip,

Reporting Period: 1-28 February 2011



Rubble of a house that is located east of Al Bureij refugee camp and it was attacked on 26 February 2011

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Introduction

The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) continued to commit violations of international human rights law (IHRL) and international humanitarian law (IHL) against the population of the Gaza Strip in November 2010. This report, which is laid out chronologically, details Israeli violations carried out in February 2011. These violations were monitored and documented by Al Mezan Center for Human Rights.

The report demonstrates the lethal and excessive use of force against Palestinians. The IOF continuous attacks and deliberate killing of Palestinians come in the context of imposing restrictions on the movement of the population in the Gaza Strip, particularly farmers who work in their fields near the borders. During the reporting period, the IOF killed three unarmed persons who did not present any threat to the IOF.

The report also details the ongoing Israeli attacks against Palestinian fishermen. It is important to note that these attacks are taking place in the context of the siege on the Gaza Strip, which deprives Palestinian residents of Gaza from, inter alia, their right to work. The IOF prevents Palestinian fishermen from working, even when they are within the Israeli-imposed 'fishing zone' of three nautical miles from shore. This 'zone' was 'declared' by the IOF in March 2009. During this reporting period the IOF attacked fishermen on several occasions, thereby preventing them from concluding their fishing trips. The IOF also opened fire on Palestinian fishermen and chased them to the shore with inflatable rubber boats.

The report also demonstrates that the IOF continued to carry out systematic attacks on civilians and their properties in areas near the border-lines as part of its attempt to enforce the so-called "security buffer zone" that extends one kilometer along the eastern and northern separation fences between the Gaza Strip and Israel. This 'buffer zone' has grave consequences for the Palestinians who live near the borders and the farmers who work in their fields near the borders. It also deprives dozens of Palestinian families from their source of living as these lands account for a high proportion of all agricultural lands in the Gaza Strip.

The report also highlights ongoing Israeli attacks on Palestinian civilians who collect and remove rubble from destroyed structures and roads near the eastern and northern border fence between Gaza and Israel. The workers collect rubble and sell it to brick factories which recycle it into bricks or to people who need to use it for construction purposes. This is the only source of material available in the Gaza Strip for making bricks and concrete for construction. Gaza suffers from an acute shortage of construction materials due to the Israeli siege. During this reporting period, the IOF carried out 12 attacks against Palestinian civilians who collect and remove rubble. As a result, one person and a donkey were killed and 13 persons were injured.

During this reporting period, the IOF carried out eight limited incursions into the Gaza Strip. During these incursions, Israeli bulldozers leveled dozens of dunams of

land and attacked Palestinian civilians and their properties near the borders. These incursions come in the context of ongoing Israeli efforts to enforce the so-called 'security buffer zone' and prevent hundreds of Palestinian farmers from farming their lands which are located near the border-line with Israel.

The report details IOF artillery shelling and missile attacks in different areas throughout the Gaza Strip. The IOF randomly attack Palestinians and their properties. As a result of these attacks several persons were injured, physical damage was sustained, and civilians, including women and children were terrified. In this reporting period, the IOF carried out 19 artillery shelling and missile attacks. As a result, Abdel Majeed Ghazi Shaheen, 20, was killed and 22 persons were injured, including two children and two women.

The report shows that the IOF continued its arbitrary arrest policy; arresting Palestinians during its limited incursions into the Gaza Strip and when pursuing fishermen. During the reporting period, the IOF pursued and arrested three fishermen while they were working in the sea. The IOF also used the crossings into and out of Gaza as a form of 'trap' for Palestinians by exploiting the need of patients to travel for treatment and blackmailing them. In this context, the IOF arrested one person who was escorting a patient on their way to hospital in Israel.

This report also addresses Israeli restrictions on the crossings and describes the movement at these crossings during February 2011. As a result of the Israeli siege, unemployment and poverty increased.

The report also presents statistical information on the consequences of the Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip in February 2011. It seeks to highlight the circumstances in which violations of international law were carried out. Therefore, the report details all of the documented violations as well as the way in which they happened.

Statistical Note:

The information presented in this report is basic information intended to provide an overview of the human rights situation. Researchers and other interested persons can obtain further detail about all of the incidents mentioned in the report from Al Mezan.

The report shows that the IOF continued to commit violations of IHRL and IHL against the population of the Gaza Strip. According to Al Mezan's field investigations, the IOF continued to:

- Deliberately kill Palestinians and use excessive force against them;
- Carry-out extra judicial killings and attacks on Palestinian individuals;
- Attack Palestinian fishermen and deprive them from their right to make a livelihood by limiting the fishing zone to three nautical miles;
- Enforce the so-called 'security buffer zone';
- Attack peaceful demonstrations against enforcing the 'security buffer zone';
- Arbitrarily arrest Palestinians; and
- Tighten the siege and the blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip and violate the freedom of movement of goods and individuals.

Statistical table on Israeli violations carried out during February 2011

Number of persons killed	6
Number of injured persons	45 (39 adults and 6 children)
Number of limited incursions	8
Number of attacks against rubble collectors	12
Number of arrests	4

Excessive and Lethal Use of Force

The IOF continued to use excessive and lethal force against Palestinian civilians. The IOF continuous attacks against Palestinians come in the context of imposing restrictions on the movement of the population in the Gaza Strip, particularly farmers who work in their fields near the borders. During the reporting period, three unarmed persons were killed.

- At approximately 1:30am on Thursday 17 February 2011, the IOF opened fire and fired artillery shells under the cover of aircrafts at three Palestinian men who were near the separation fence between the Gaza Strip and Israel, in the north of the Gaza Strip. The three were in the As-Siafa area, northwest of Beit Lahya town, in the North Gaza district. The shooting lasted for about an hour. At approximately 8:20am on the same day, the dead bodies of the three men were transferred by an ambulance to the Kamal Odwan Hospital in Beit Lahya town. Al Mezan identified the names of the three men as follows:
 - Jihad Fathi Mohammed Khalaf, 20, from Jabalia;
 - Ashraf Abdel Lateef Rasheed Iqteefan, 32; from Gaza city; and
 - Tala't Mohammed Salama Ar-Rawagh, 40, from Gaza city.

The IOF announced that it killed three Palestinians who approached the separation fence to smuggle into Israel through the separation fence between the Gaza Strip and Israel. However, Al Mezan's investigations found that the three were civilians working in the area with other people.

According to Al Mezan's field investigations, the dead bodies were defaced and torn apart. Their dead bodies were carried about one kilometer, on horse-driven carts by workers who were with the victims in the area, and then an ambulance took them to hospital.

The field investigations by Al Mezan indicated that the three victims were in the area to collect seashells to sell them. They used to go to this coastal area west of the As-Siafa area, not far from the separation fence. The three victims were dressed in civilian clothes and did not carry any weapons on them. They did not form any threat to the IOF when they were attacked.

Attacks against Fishermen

Excerpt from fisherman Mustafa Hjaz Al Laham, 41, affidavit to Al Mezan

At around 11pm on Saturday 19 February 2011, my nephew Hani Hjaz Al Lahan, 27, my cousin Mahmoud Hasan Saleh Al Laham, 30, and I were on a fishing hasaka (boat). We were sailing opposite the coast of Khan Younis. We were 300 kilometers off the Gaza shore, within the limited fishing zone. We dropped the nets in the sea. I saw an Israeli boat about one kilometer away from us. The Israeli boat was sailing quickly towards us. My nephew, cousin, and I started to withdraw the fishing nets. During that time, the Israeli boat surrounded us. When we withdrew the net I switched the hasaka engine on and began to sail eastwards to land. I heard someone on an amplifier saying "stop or I will shoot you". I switched the engine off. I saw a number of Israeli soldiers on the Israeli boat. They ordered us to move to the bow. Then they ordered us to take off our clothes. They also ordered us to swim to their boat which was about 20 meters from us. I jumped into the sea and swam to the Israeli boat. I got into the boat. One soldier searched me immediately cuffed

In this reporting period, the IOF continued its systematic attacks on fishermen in the Gaza Strip. Israel imposed restrictions prohibiting Gaza fishermen from fishing more than three nautical miles off the coast. It is common for IOF soldiers to open fire on fishermen, pursue them in the water while they are fishing, and destroy and confiscate their equipment, including their nets and boats. Such acts constitute flagrant violations of Israel's legal obligations as an occupying power under international law. They violate the fishermen's rights to life and work. Al Mezan documented these attacks as follows:

- At approximately 11am on Saturday 19 February 2010, Israeli gunboats that were patrolling the waters off the coast of the Gaza Strip opened fire at a Palestinian fishing boat off the coast of Khan Younis. Three fishermen were working on the boat about 3 kilometers off Gaza shore.

In his affidavit to Al Mezan, one of the fishermen said that IOF military boats moved towards the Palestinian fishing boat and surrounded them. The IOF ordered three fishermen who were on the fishing boats to take off their clothes and to swim towards the IOF boats. The IOF arrested the three of them. The IOF confiscated the Palestinian fishing boat. Al Mezan identified the names of the fishermen as follows:

- Mustafa Hjaz Al Laham, 41;
- Hjaz Hani Al Laham; 17; and
- Mahmoud Hassan Al Laham, 30.

At approximately 8:30pm on the same day, the IOF released the fishermen at Erez crossing after interrogating them. The boat was still confiscated when this report was being published.

At approximately 8:20am on Wednesday 23 February 2011, Israeli gunboats that were patrolling the coast of the Gaza Strip opened fire at Palestinian fishing boats off the coast of Jabalia town, in North Gaza District. No casualties or

injuries were reported, but the fishermen were terrified and abandoned their work.

Enforcing 'Security Buffer Zone' and Attacks on Peaceful Assemblies

The IOF continued to open fire on an almost daily basis on Palestinians near the Gaza Strip's eastern and northern borders with Israel; an area inside the Gaza Strip that the IOF has declared to be a security 'buffer zone'. Some attacks were carried-out close to the border fence; many other attacks took place when the civilians were more than a kilometer from the borderline. In February 2010, Israeli aircrafts dropped leaflets claiming that its soldiers fire at Palestinians only when they are 300 meters away from the border fence. Israeli violations related to enforcing the 'security buffer zone' are classified into: attacks on civilians near the borders, attacks on Palestinian civilians collecting scrap materials and rubble, and limited IOF incursions into the Gaza Strip. The following violations were perpetrated in February 2011:

Attacks on Palestinian Civilians near the Borders

During this reporting period, the IOF continued to attack Palestinians near the Gaza Strip's eastern and northern borders with Israel. These attacks prevent hundreds of Palestinian farmers from farming their lands which are located near the border-line with Israel. Al Mezan documented these attacks as follows:

- At approximately 7:50am on Monday 7 February 2011, the IOF opened fire at Palestinian farmers who were in their fields near the separation fence between the Gaza Strip and Israel. The farmers were in the Al Qatbaniya area, east of Beit Hanoun, when IOF opened fire on them. No casualties or injuries were reported, but the farmers were terrified and abandoned their farms.
- At approximately 12:40pm on Saturday 12 February 2011, the IOF opened fire at Palestinian farmers who were in their fields near the separation fence between the Gaza Strip and Israel, north of Beit Lahiya. No casualties or injuries were reported, but the farmers were terrified and abandoned their farms.
- At approximately 2:40pm on Monday 28 February 2011, the IOF opened fire at Palestinian farmers who were in their fields north of the Islamic Martyrs Cemetery. No casualties or injuries were reported, but the farmers were terrified and abandoned their farms.

IOF Attacks against Palestinian Civilians Collecting Scrap Materials and Rubble

The IOF continued to attack Palestinian civilians collecting scrap materials and rubble from destroyed structures that are located near the northern and eastern separation fence between the Gaza Strip and Israel. These destroyed structures have been destroyed by the IOF in the past. The workers collect rubble and sell it to brick factories which recycle it into bricks or to people who need to use it for construction purposes. This is the only source of material available in the Gaza Strip for making bricks and concrete for construction. Gaza suffers from an acute shortage of construction materials due the Israeli siege.

The Israeli siege imposed on the Gaza Strip impedes governmental and non-governmental efforts to decrease poverty and unemployment. The Israeli siege

deprives Palestinians of their most basic rights; in particular the right to life. As poverty and unemployment are prevalent, collecting rubble and scrap material from destroyed structures has flourished as an activity aimed at creating a source of income as well as providing construction materials. During this reporting period, Al Mezan documented 12 attacks against Palestinian civilians collecting scrap materials and rubble. As a result of these attacks, one person and a donkey were killed and 13 persons were injured. Al Mezan documented these attacks as follows:

- At approximately 11:30am on Saturday 5 February 2011, the IOF opened fire at a group of Palestinian civilians as they were collecting scrap and rubble from destroyed structures near the border fence between Gaza and Israel. The group was 200 meters from the border fence near the Burat Abu Samra area north of Beit Lahiya, in the North Gaza district, when IOF fired at them. As a result, Abdullah Rabee' Ahmed 'Ulwan, 46, was injured in his right thigh. Medical sources at Kamal Odwan Hospital described his injury as moderate.
- At approximately 9:30am on Saturday 5 February 2011, the IOF opened fire at a group of Palestinian civilians as they were collecting scrap material and rubble from destroyed structures west of Kani Crossing, east of Al Sheja'iya neighborhood, east of Gaza city. As a result, Belal Abdullah Ad-Da'our, 20, was injured in his right hand and leg and Ibrahim An-Nabaheen, 20, was injured in his right leg and pelvis. The two injured persons are from the Al Mughraga village, south of Gaza City.
- At approximately 2:30pm on Monday 7 February 2011, Israeli occupation forces (IOF) opened fire at a group of Palestinian civilians as they were collecting scrap material and rubble from destroyed structures west of Kani Crossing, east of Al Sheja'iya neighborhood, east of Gaza city. As a result, Nash'at Sa'eed Hawas, 17, who is from Gaza city, was injured in his left leg, beneath the knee.
- At approximately 1:10pm on Saturday 12 February 2011, the IOF opened fire at a group of Palestinian civilians as they were collecting scrap and rubble from destroyed structures near the border fence between Gaza and Israel. The group was about 200 meters from the border fence near the evacuated settlement Eli Sinai, northwest of Beit Lahya, in the North Gaza district, when IOF fired at them. As a result, Ashour Mohammed Ashour Shkhedem, 29, was injured in his right knee. Medical sources at Kamal Odwan Hospital described his injury as moderate.
- At approximately 12:15pm on Saturday 21 February 2011, the Israeli occupation forces (IOF) opened fire at a group of Palestinian civilians as they were collecting scrap and rubble from destroyed structures near the border fence between Gaza and Israel. The group was about 200 meters from the border fence near the evacuated settlement Eli Sinai, northwest of Beit Lahya, in the North Gaza district, when IOF fired at them. As a result, Mahran Rezeq Tanboura, 24, was injured in his left knee. Medical sources at Kamal Odwan Hospital described his injury as moderate, as the bullet was removed from his knee.

At around 6am on Sunday 12 February 2011, my relative and work partner Ahmed and I went on a donkey drawn cart to Eli Sinai, the evacuated settlement, east of As-Siafa area, northeast of Beit Lahya. We arrived at the area at around 6:40am. We started to destroy cement blocks using heavy rocks to small and medium stones. After long hours of hard work we usually sell these stones. Every cartload is sold for 10 NIS. We work together all day. We sell four to five carts every day to obtain 60 NIS. We share this money between us.

Dozens of workers and I were about 200 meters away from the northern separation fence. I was standing to the north of Eli Sinai, the evacuated settlement, to carry stone to put on the cart. It was around 12:15pm on Saturday. I suddenly heard the sound of a bullet being shot. Calm prevailed in the place. Then I saw my left leg was bleeding. I was scared. I hysterically ran southwards. .

One of my relatives, Ahmed As-Sous, stopped me. He carried me on his donkey drawn cart. My relative, Ziyad Tanboura, came with us on the cart. We went to the Al Khusa area which is located east of Doggett, an evacuated settlement, which is located in the north west of Beit Lahya. My relatives who worked with me called an ambulance. . The ambulance carried me to the Kamal Odwan Hospital where I received medical treatment. I had an X-ray there. The doctors told me that the bullet entered my left knee and passed under my kneecap. Fortunately, the bullet exited without damaging the bone. At around 3:30pm on the same day I left the hospital.

Excerpts from Mahran Rezeq Tanboura's affidavit to Al Mezan:

- At approximately 9:45am on Monday 14 February 2011, the IOF opened fire at a group of Palestinian civilians who were collecting scrap and rubble from destroyed structures near the border fence between Gaza and Israel. The group was about 200 meters from the border fence near the evacuated settlement, Eli Sinai, northwest of Beit Lahya, in the North Gaza district, when IOF fired at them. As a result, Suliman Salim Mohammed Abu Rekab, 20, who is a resident of Gaza city, was injured in his left leg. Medical sources at Kamal Odwan Hospital described his injury as light.
- At approximately 1:30pm on Thursday 17 February 2011, the IOF opened fire at a group of Palestinian civilians as they were collecting scrap materials and rubble from destroyed structures west of Karni Crossing, east of Al Sheja'iya neighborhood, in the east of Gaza city. As a result, Mustafa Khader Al Manasra, 17, and Waleed Khalil Jendea, 19, were injured, both in their right legs. Medical sources described their injuries as moderate.
- At approximately 12:30pm on Tuesday 22 February 2011, the IOF opened fire at a group of Palestinian civilians as they were collecting scrap and rubble from destroyed structures near the border fence between Gaza and Israel. The group was about 400 meters from the border fence near Erez crossing, in the North Gaza district, when IOF fired at them. As a result, Saleem Kamal Abed

Barakat, 21, who is from Gaza city, was injured in his right thigh. Medical sources at Kamal Odwan Hospital described his injury as light.

- At approximately 9:45am on Wednesday 23 February 2011, the Israeli occupation forces (IOF) opened fire at a group of Palestinian civilians who were about 300 meters from the border fence near the Burat Abu Samra area, north of Beit Lahya town, in the North Gaza district. As a result, Nedal Mohammed Mohammed Halawa, 21, who is from Gaza city, was injured in his left leg. Medical sources at Kamal Odwan Hospital described his injury as moderate.
- At approximately 9:30am on Wednesday 23 February 2011, the IOF opened fire at a group of Palestinian civilians as they were collecting scrap materials and rubble from destroyed structures west of Karni Crossing, east of Al Sheja'iya neighborhood, in the east of Gaza city. As a result, Ihab Dawoud Al Ashqar, 32, was injured in his abdomen and left leg. Medical sources at Balsam Hospital described his injury as critical. He was referred to Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. Al Ashqar lives in Beit Lahya.
- At approximately 11:40am on Saturday 26 February 2011, the Israeli occupation forces (IOF) opened fire at a group of Palestinian civilians who were collecting scrap and rubble from destroyed structures near the border fence between Gaza and Israel. The group was about 300 meters from the border fence near the evacuated settlement, Eli Sinai, northwest of Beit Lahya, in the North Gaza district, when IOF fired at them. As a result, Khalid Mohammed Mustafa Al Hsoumi, 36, was injured in his right leg, causing a fracture. Medical sources at Kamal Odwan Hospital described his injury as severe. Other civilians who were in the area were terrified and left their work.
- At approximately 10am on Monday 28 February 2011, the IOF opened fire at a group of Palestinian civilians as they were collecting scrap material and rubble from destroyed structures near the border fence between Gaza and Israel. The group was about 300 meters from the border fence west of the Burat Abu Samra area, north of Beit Lahya, in the North Gaza district, when the IOF fired at them. As a result, Omar Arafa Abdel Lateef Ma'rouf, 20, was severely injured.
- At approximately 11am on the same day, three Israeli tanks moved under sporadic fire in the same area and took Ma'rouf to Israel. At approximately 2pm on the same day, the IOF submitted Ma'rouf's dead body to the Palestinian Liaison Office, which is located in the Ministry of Civil Affairs' office at the Erez crossing, in the north of the Gaza Strip. The dead body was admitted to Shifa Hospital in Gaza city.

In his affidavit to Al Mezan, Talal 'Aish Abdel Lateef Ma'rouf said that while he was taking care of land that he was renting from the Hamouda family he saw his cousin Omar arriving at the area on a donkey drawn cart. He added that Omar started to destroy stones in order to sell them to buy food for his wife and his infant Mohammed. Talal said that he was surprised by the onset of shooting which lasted for about an hour. Talal tried to find his cousin but he could not see him. While Talal was trying to find his cousin Omar, he saw

Omar's donkey lying on the ground. The donkey was killed. Talal suspected that his cousin Omar was hiding, afraid of the continuous shooting. Then Talal saw two bulldozers and armored bulldozers had moved into the place. Talal and his family who were accompanying him immediately left the area. At approximately 12:30pm on the same day, Talal returned to his land after the withdrawal of the Israeli tanks. Talal saw signs of bulldozers in the place where his cousin was. Talal informed the Red Crescent Society, who arrived and waited in a nearby place awaiting permission from the Israelis to enter the area. However, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which is responsible for coordinating with the Israelis, informed the Red Crescent Society that the IOF had handed Omar's dead body to the liaison office at Erez Cross. When Talal went to his uncle's house, he was informed that the IOF tried to provide medical treatment for Omar but he died from his wounds at approximately 11:30am on the same day. The Bullet entered Omar's left side and exited from his right side. A Hebrew newspaper reported the death of Omar.

Limited Incursions into the Gaza Strip

The IOF continued to carry-out limited incursions into the northern and eastern areas of the Gaza Strip. During this reporting period, the IOF carried out eight limited incursions into the Gaza Strip. During these incursions, Israeli bulldozers leveled dozens of dunams of land and attacked Palestinian civilians and their properties near the borders. These incursions prevent hundreds of Palestinian farmers from farming their lands which are located near the border-line with Israel. As a result of these incursions, Adel Othman Jendea, 25, was killed and ten persons were injured. Al Mezan documented these incursions as follows:

- At approximately 7am on Tuesday 8 February 2011, six Israeli tanks moved under fire about 400 meters into the Burat Abu Samra area, north of Beit Lahiya town, west of the Bedouin (Um An-Naser) Village, in the North Gaza district.
- At approximately 9am on the same day, another five Israeli tanks moved into the same area and stationed there. No casualties or injuries were reported in this limited incursion. At approximately 5:45pm on the same day, the IOF withdrew from the area.
- At approximately 8:10am on Tuesday 8 February 2011, five Israeli tanks moved under fire about 200 meters into the As-Syafa area, northwest of Beit Lahiya town, in North Gaza district. The tanks moved slowly eastwards and accompanied the tanks which had invaded the Burat Abu Samra area. No casualties or injuries were reported.
- At approximately 7:30am on Wednesday 9 February 2011, four Israeli tanks accompanied by three armored bulldozers moved around 250 meters into the east of Wadi Gaza (Gaza Valley) village. The incursion lasted for about two hours. No casualties or injuries were reported.
- At approximately 8:30am on Tuesday 15 February 2011, Israeli tanks accompanied by armored bulldozers moved about 300 meters into the Al Fukhari town, east of Khan Younis district. Bulldozers leveled lands that had been razed before. At approximately 12:30pm on the same day, the IOF

withdrew from the area. No casualties or injuries were reported in this limited incursion.

- At approximately 8am on Tuesday 22 February 2011, Israeli tanks accompanied by armored bulldozers moved about 300 meters into the southeast of Al Qarara town, in the east of Khan Younis district. Bulldozers leveled agricultural land that had been previously razed. . At app. 1pm on the same day, the IOF withdrew from the area. No casualties or injuries were reported.
- At approximately 8am on Wednesday 23 February 2011, four Israeli tanks accompanied by three armored bulldozers moved about 200 meters into the eastern parts of the Wadi Gaza (Gaza Valley) village. Bulldozers leveled lands in the area. The Israeli tanks moved to southern parts of the village. At approximately 10am on the same day, the IOF withdrew from the area.
- At approximately 9am on Wednesday 23 February 2011, four Israeli tanks and an armored bulldozer moved under heavy fire about 300 meters into Malaka square, east of Az-Zaitoun neighborhood, in the east of Gaza City. Bulldozers leveled agricultural land in the area.

At around midday, another force backed the invaded forces and fired two artillery shells at a group of Palestinian men who gathered near the As-wada Factory in the east of Az-Zaitoun neighborhood, to follow the developments on the ground. As a result, nine persons were injured. Adel Othman Jendia, 25, was critically injured. At approximately 7pm on the same day, Jendia died from his wounds. In the evening hours on the same day, the IOF withdrew from the area.

- At approximately 9am on Monday 28 February 2011, seven Israeli tanks moved about 300 meters into the An-Nahda neighborhood, east of Rafah town. The IOF fired several artillery shells at Gaza International Airport. As a result, one person was injured in the legs. Medical sources at Abu Yousif An-Najjar Hospital described his injury as moderate. An artillery shell fell on the house of Hanan Abdel Qader Abu Jarad. The house, which is about 100 square meters in area and hosts five family members, was completely destroyed. The house is located in the Al Shoka village, east of Rafah crossing. At approximately 5pm on the same day, the IOF withdrew from the area.

Artillery Shelling and Missile Attacks

During the reporting period, the IOF continued to fire artillery shells and missiles at different areas throughout the Gaza Strip. The IOF randomly attacked Palestinians and their properties. As a result of these attacks, several people sustained injuries from shrapnel, houses and other civilian objects sustained physical damage, and civilians were terrified. According to Al Mezan's documentation, the IOF carried out 19 artillery shelling and missile attacks. As a result, Abdel Majeed Ghazi Shaheen,

20, was killed and 22 persons were injured, including six children and two women. Al Mezan documented these attacks as follows:

- At approximately 6:10pm on Wednesday 2 February 2011, an Israeli aircraft fired a missile at the Gaza-Egypt border, east of the Rafah crossing, in the Al Shoka village, southeast of Rafah town. No casualties or injuries were reported.
- At approximately 11:50pm on Tuesday 8 February 2011, an Israeli aircraft fired a missile at an open area, south of Malaka Square, east of Az-Zaytoun neighborhood, in the east of Gaza city. No casualties or injuries were reported, but people were terrified.
- At approximately 7am on Wednesday 9 February 2011, the IOF fired five artillery shells at an open agricultural area east of Abasan town, east of Khan Younis district. No casualties or injuries were reported.
- At approximately 1:15am on Wednesday 9 February 2011, an Israeli aircraft attacked a training site for the Al-Quds Brigades, the military wing of the Islamic Jihad Movement. The site is located west of Khan Younis district, south of the Gaza Strip. As a result, two persons sustained light injuries and bruises. The site sustained physical damages.
- At around midnight on 9 February 2011, an Israeli aircraft attacked the Hashem Al Hatou and Sons Plastics Factory, which is under construction with an area of 1,200 square meters. The factory is located in the Al Qerem crossroad in the Al Tuffah neighborhood, northeast of Gaza city. It is owned by Mohammed Hashem Al Hatou. The factory was completely destroyed. In addition, an adjacent 700-square-meter drug store; one of the main Ministry of Health (MoH) stores in Gaza, was also destroyed. According to Dr. Muneer Al Bursh, the general director of pharmacy at the MoH in Gaza, “the attack will immediately deepen the shortage of medicine in Gaza.”

Eleven people were injured in this attack; four of whom were children and two women. They were injured from the shattered windowpanes in their houses. Moreover, the Nour Al Ma'aref Private School, which is close to the attacked facility, sustained major damages. The school hosts about 600 students from first to tenth grades. The schools roof, windows, doors and the playground were damaged. The school's administration decided to close it down until the building is repaired.

Several other factories and metal workshops in the same area were also damaged in the same attack. The roof and walls of a 1,200-square-meter textiles factory, owned by Jawad Mohammed Odeh, were damaged. The four-story, 1,500-square-meter As-Sowsi Factory for wood, which is owned by Mujahed Mahmoud As-Sousi, was also damaged. The offices of the As-Sousi Wood Company and its furniture exhibit, which are located opposite the attacked place, were also damaged.

- At approximately 10am on Saturday 19 February 2011, the IOF opened fire at the Koz Abu Hamam area, southeast of Deir Al Balah town, in Middle Gaza district. No casualties or injuries were reported.
- At approximately 10pm on Wednesday 23 February 2011, Israeli occupation forces (IOF) fired two artillery shells at a group of Palestinian resistance fighters who were near the Abdel Aziz Ar-Rantisi mosque, east of Az-Zaitoun neighborhood, east of Gaza city. As a result, two persons sustained moderate injuries.
- At approximately 12:05am on Thursday 24 February 2011, an Israeli aircraft fired a missile at a training site for the Ezadin Al-Qasam Brigades, the military wing of the Hamas movement, west of Gaza city. No casualties or injuries were reported in the two attacks.
- At approximately 12:20am on Thursday 24 February 2011, Israeli aircrafts fired two missiles at a training site for the Ezadin Al-Qasam Brigades, the military wing of the Hamas movement, south east of Gaza city. No casualties or injuries were reported in the attack.
- At approximately 12:10am on Thursday 24 February 2011, Israeli aircrafts attacked a small agricultural store owned by Wael Al Majayda, 40, near the separation fence between the Gaza Strip and Israel. The store is located north of Khan Younis city and is about 600 square meters in area. As a result, the store was completely destroyed and the brick fence surrounding the land on which it was built, were destroyed. An adjacent four-story house was also partially damaged in the attack. The house hosts six families of 36 residents and is owned by Khalid Na'eem Wafi, 42. No casualties or injuries were reported in this attack.
- At approximately 3:30am on Thursday 24 February 2011, an Israeli aircraft fired a missile at a metal workshop in the Az-Zawaida village, in Middle Gaza district. The asbestos-roofed workshop is about one dunam (1000 square meters) and is owned by Ibrahim Al Hayya, 49. As a result, the asbestos roof of the workshop was damaged.
- At approximately 7:05pm on Thursday 24 February 2011, an Israeli reconnaissance drone fired a missile at a Magnum jeep in the As-Salam neighborhood, south of Rafah town near the Gaza-Egypt border. As a result, two persons were moderately injured. A house belonging to Mansour Hamdan Mansour Bin Hasan, was partially damaged. The house is about 150 square meters in area. Four families live in the house, about 25 family members, including five children.
- At approximately 5am on Thursday 24 February 2011, an Israeli aircraft fired a missile at an open area in the Al Shoka village, east of Rafah town. As a result, the house of Hasan Mahmoud Hamad, 48, was destroyed. The asbestos-roofed house is about 111 square meters in area. The house hosts six family members, four of whom are children. An adjacent house belonging to Ashraf Hasan Shehda Abu Lebda, 36, sustained physical damages. The house is about

140 square meters in area and hosts five family members, including three children.

- At approximately 3:05am on Thursday 24 February 2011, Israeli aircrafts fired two missiles at an area near the Salah Ad-Din Street, east of the An-Nuseirat refugee camp, in Middle Gaza district. One of the missiles fell on an asbestos-roofed store, which is about 1,500 square meters in area and is owned by Adham Shurab. The missile left a big hole in the store. The second missile fell on a two-story office building with an area of 150 square meters, which is owned by Hassan Yousif Shurab, 46. As a result, the building was completely destroyed and four adjacent industrial facilities were partially damaged.
- At approximately 3:30am on Saturday 26 February 2011, an Israeli aircraft fired a missile at a rest house owned by Imad Ad-Din Mohammed Aqel, 38. The rest house is located behind the Abdeen wedding hall on the Salah Ad-Din Street, at the edge of the Al Bureij refugee camp. As a result, the rest house was completely destroyed. Eight adjacent houses, a car, a mosque and a livestock farm were partially damaged. Moreover, a girl, Haneen Nasr Ammar, 17, was injured while she was at her home. Dozens of civilians were terrified and panicked due to this attack.
- At approximately 1:50pm on Saturday 26 February 2011, an Israeli aircraft fired a missile at a training site for the Ezadin Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of the Hamas movement, northwest of Rafah town, in the south of the Gaza Strip. As a result, Mohammed Ayman Tabasi and Atta Abdullah Abu Jazar (19 and 42 respectively), who were coincidentally in the area, suffered from a panic attack.
- At approximately 2:10pm on Saturday 26 February 2011, an Israeli aircraft fired a missile at a training site for the Ezadin Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of the Hamas movement, north of Sa'ad Sayil barracks on the eastern street of Rafah town, in the south of the Gaza Strip. As a result, a child, Sajja Haitham Abu Sharekh, 1.5 years old, was injured while she was in her house. Husam Salah Abu Mteer, 37, suffered from a panic attack. Medical sources at Abu Yousif An-Najjar Hospital described their injuries as moderate.

- At approximately 3:30pm on Saturday 26 February 2011, Israeli aircrafts fired two missiles at a residential house, east of Al Bureij refugee camp. The house is 700 meters away from the separation fence. The house is owned by Ahmed Eid Suliman Abu Shareb, 32, and hosts five family members, three of whom are children. According to Al Mezan's field investigations, an adjacent house owned by Hatem Eid Suliman Abu Shareb, 37, was completely destroyed. The house hosts seven family members, five of whom are children. Another adjacent house and a tin store sustained physical damages.
- At approximately 8pm on Sunday 27 February 2011, Abdel Majeed Ghazi Shaheen, 20, was killed. Shaheen was probably killed in an Israeli attack on Malaka square, east of Az-Zaitoun neighborhood, east of Gaza City.

Excerpts from Ahmed Eid Abu Shareb's affidavit to Al Mezan:

At around 3:30pm on Saturday 26 February 2011, while I was in my home I received a phone call on my cell phone. Someone introduced himself as from the Israeli forces, he spoke to me. He said, "Are you Ahmed Abu Shareb?" I answered yes, that's right. He then said "This is the Israeli Defense forces". I asked him "what do you want?" The man said: "Listen carefully; you have to evacuate your home within ten minutes." Then he hung up the phone. I immediately evacuated my family, relatives, and neighbors. Ten minutes later, my cell phone rang and I answered. A man said: "this is the Israeli defense forces. Did you evacuate the house?" I said "yes". Then I heard a whistle like the whistle of a missile. I ran about 30 meters away, eastwards. I then heard a sound of a big explosion. I ran away. When I returned home, I found my home was completely destroyed. I did not take anything from my house. At the beginning I thought that someone was kidding with me. I work for the Palestinian national authority. I have no military affiliation. I did not expect that my home would be attacked.

Arbitrary Detention and Arrest

During the reporting period, the IOF continued its policy of arbitrary and political detentions against the population of the Gaza Strip. In this reporting period, the IOF arrested three fishermen. The IOF also used the crossings into and out of Gaza as a form of 'trap' for Palestinians by exploiting the need of patients to travel for treatment and blackmailing them. In this context, the IOF arrested one person who was escorting a patient on their way to hospital in Israel. Al Mezan documented the arrests as follows:

- At approximately 10:30am on Tuesday 15 February 2011, the IOF arrested Mohammed Mosa Zo'rob, 28, from the town of Rafah in the south of the Gaza Strip, as he was accompanying his sick sister, Hanan, 42. The patient suffers from cancer and Guillain-Barré syndrome, and Mohammed had previously donated bone marrow to his sister. Her health condition had deteriorated seriously four days before she made the trip to Erez Crossing; therefore, a hospital in Gaza referred her for urgent treatment in the Beilinson hospital in

Israel, and she and her brother were granted a permit from the Israeli authorities on 14 February 2011.

The patient and her brother had been granted permits to pass through the Erez crossing and access to hospital in Israel for the purpose of receiving urgent medical treatment. Due to the critical condition of the patient, they were transported to the crossing in a Palestinian ambulance equipped with an ICU, on 15 February 2011. As they reached the crossing, the IOF allowed the ambulance to pass through and the patient was transported to hospital by an Israeli ambulance. However, the IOF arrested the patient's brother. According to Al Mezan's field investigations, the brother had accompanied his sick sister to hospitals in Israel, via the Erez crossing, five times in the past. He had never before been arrested. Acting on the request of their family, Al Mezan contacted the Israeli authorities and was informed that the prisoner was being held in Shikma prison in Ashkelon.

Excerpts from Hidaya Mosa Zo'rob's affidavit to Al Mezan:

I'm Hidaya Mosa Rezeq Zo'rob, 28. I'm married. I have a family of six members, four of whom are children. I'm a housewife. I live in a neighborhood, west of Rafah . At around 6:30am on Tuesday 15 February 2011, my husband Mohammed Mosa Mohammed Zo'rob went to the European Gaza Hospital in Khan Younis to accompany his sister Hanan, 42. Hanan has suffered from cancer and Guillain-Barré syndrome for a year and a half. My husband had accompanied his sick sister to hospitals, particularly the Beilinson hospital in Israel, via the Erez crossing five times in the past. He had previously donated bone marrow to his sister. Hanan's health condition had deteriorated seriously four days before she made the trip to Erez Crossing; therefore, a hospital in Gaza referred her for urgent treatment in a hospital in Israel. At approximately 8am on the same day, my husband accompanied his sister in an ICU ambulance to Erez crossing. My husband made his last call to his uncle, Issa Mohammed Mosa Zo'rob, at around 10:30am on the same day. My husband told his uncle that his sister was being transferred to an Israeli hospital by an ambulance. He also told his uncle that he was at Erez crossing to finish some procedures and he would follow his sister daughter. My husband's uncle tried to call him several times, but my husband hung the phone up on him. At around 7pm on Tuesday 15 January 2011, Al Mezan told us that my husband was detained at the Ashkelon prison in Israel. Hanan was alone at the Hospital despite her deteriorated health condition.

At approximately 11am on Saturday 19 February 2010, Israeli gunboats that were patrolling the waters off the coast of the Gaza Strip opened fire at a Palestinian fishing boat, off the coast of Khan Younis. Three fishermen were working on the boat about 3 kilometers off Gaza shore.

In his affidavit to Al Mezan, one of the fishermen said that IOF military boats moved towards the Palestinian fishing boat and surrounded them. The IOF ordered three fishermen who were on the fishing boats to take off their clothes and to swim towards the IOF boats. The IOF arrested the three of them. The IOF confiscated the Palestinian fishing boat. Al Mezan identified the names of the fishermen as follows:

- Mustafa Hjazi Al Laham, 41;
- Hjazi Hani Al Laham; 17; and
- Mahmoud Hassan Al Laham, 30.

At approximately 8:30pm on the same day, the IOF released the fishermen at Erez crossing after interrogating them. The boat was still confiscated when this report was being published.

Movement at the Crossings

The IOF continued to impose a tight siege on the Gaza Strip for the fourth consecutive year. It has become apparent that the Israeli statements that the IOF would ease the siege were an attempt to placate the international community after the attack on the 'freedom flotilla.' The so-called 'easing of the siege' has had no impact on the local economy. During this reporting period, the IOF continued to impose restrictions on the movement of individuals and commodities. The IOF partially opened some of the crossings into Gaza for limited hours. During these limited hours, the IOF allowed the entry of some commodities into and out of the Gaza Strip. During this reporting period, the IOF continued to completely close some of the crossings. Al Mezan summarized the movement at the crossings as follows:

Beit Hanoun (Erez) Crossing

During this reporting period, the IOF completely closed the Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing for four days for the movement of Palestinian civilians. The IOF imposes restrictions on the movement of patients and their escorts, international journalists, employees of international agencies, and Palestinians living in Israel who wish to visit their relatives in the Gaza Strip. Although the IOF opens the crossing for the aforementioned cases, access is extremely limited. The IOF allows the passing of a very limited number of people: for limited humanitarian cases, foreign passport holders, diplomats, and businesspersons. The IOF does not allow Gazan workers and travelers who travel for religious, social or tourism purposes to pass Erez. The number of persons allowed to pass the crossing varies from one day to another. Al Mezan summarized the movement at Erez crossing as follows:

During this time, the IOF allowed 698 patients and 672 escorts, 751 international employees, 192 UNRWA employees, 69 diplomats, 75 journalists, 1201 businesspersons holding Palestinian businessmen cards BMC other businesspersons , 172 Palestinians living in Israel who were visiting their relatives in the Gaza Strip, and 92 travelers who travel via Allenby (Al Karama) to pass the crossing.

Al Muntar (Karni) Crossing

During the reporting period, the IOF partially opened the crossing for 11 days during which the IOF allowed the entry of 1050 truck loads carrying tons of wheat and fodder. 581 of the 1050 truck loads were carrying gravel for UNRWA approved projects. The IOF totally closed the crossings for 17 days. The IOF partially opened the crossing for 15 days to export 52 truckloads of strawberries and flowers.

Rafah Terminal Crossing

The Egyptian authorities have decided to close the Rafah terminal crossing due to the incidents that took place in Egypt. The Egyptian authorities announced that the Rafah Crossing would be reopened in the morning hours on Tuesday 22 February 2011. About 300 persons are allowed to travel via the crossing daily. A list including the names and dates of birth of persons who wish to enter Egypt from Gaza is expected to be sent daily to the Egyptian authorities. The categories of people who are expected to be allowed to cross into Egypt include patients, students, persons who hold visas, and internationals.

At approximately 7pm on Friday 18 February 2011, the Egyptian authorities allowed Palestinians who were trapped in Egypt to return to the Gaza Strip.

The Egyptian authorities have decided to continue to open the Rafah terminal crossing for humanitarian cases including for patients and persons who hold residency cards overseas. During the reporting period, the Egyptian Ports Authority decided to close the Rafah terminal crossing on Fridays and Saturdays as an official weekend. It also decided to work on Thursday just for half a day.

The Egyptian authorities only opened the crossing partially for six days out of the 28 days it was open. During these times, around 1142 persons were allowed to travel to Egypt, including patients, students, persons who hold residency overseas and medical and media delegations who visited the Gaza Strip. 2241 persons were allowed into the Gaza Strip, including injured persons, patients and their escorts, and trapped persons. Around 102 persons who wanted to enter the Gaza Strip were not allowed.

Karm Abu Salim (Kerem Shalom) Crossing

During the reporting period, the IOF opened the Karm Abu Salem crossing for 20 days and several hours each day for the entry of 2,744 truckloads of food, medical commodities and basic humanitarian aid. The IOF allowed the entry of 90 truckloads of cooking gas (1,893.72 tons), and 8 truckloads carrying industrial diesel fuel for the Gaza Power Plant (113,137.8) liters. The IOF also allowed five truckloads of fuel of about 449,145 liters for cars to enter the Gaza Strip. Moreover, the IOF allowed the entry of eight truckloads of industrial fuel of about 449.145 liters.

Export: the IOF allowed the export of 26 truckloads carrying 96,112 kilograms strawberries and 26 truckloads carrying 1,553,970 flowers.

Conclusion

This report detailed the ongoing IOF violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law against the population of the Gaza Strip. The IOF continued to indiscriminately open fire on and attack civilians. The IOF also continued to attack fishermen and prevent them from working, even when they are within the Israeli-imposed 'fishing zone' of three nautical miles from shore. The IOF also pursued fishermen to the shore with inflatable rubber boats and confiscated their boats. The IOF continued to attack Palestinian civilians and their properties near the borders. These attacks come in the context of ongoing Israeli efforts to enforce the so-called 'security buffer zone' that, according to IOF announcements, extends 300 meters along the Gaza Strip's borderlines with Israel. Some attacks were carried-out close to the border fence; many other attacks took place when civilians were more than 1.5 kilometers away from the borderline. The IOF also continued to attack peaceful assemblies.

Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights reiterates its condemnation of the continued and systematic attacks by the IOF against Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip. It also condemns the ongoing collective punishment imposed on Gaza's population which came in the context of blockade in violation of international law. It also reiterates its condemnation of the ongoing Israeli attacks against Palestinian fishermen.

As these violations and the Israeli siege of Gaza continue, Al Mezan expresses its grave concern at the lack of any meaningful international protection for Gaza's population. This has encouraged the IOF to continue to perpetrate serious violations of IHL and international human rights law in Gaza as well as in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) for a now very lengthy period.

Al Mezan, therefore, calls on the international community to promptly intervene to lift the Israeli siege imposed on the Gaza Strip and to ensure the entry of basic commodities for rehabilitation, food, medicines, clothes, and fuel, and to allow the free movement of the population of Gaza Strip.

Al Mezan asserts that the Israeli collective punishment of Gaza's population is a gross violation of human rights and IHL. The Israeli blockade and many of its military attacks are grave violations of international law.

Al Mezan, therefore, calls on the international community to uphold their moral and legal obligations and take action to bring to a swift end the violations of international law perpetrated in the oPt including by ending the blockade and providing protection for the civilian population. Al Mezan also calls for all those who have ordered or committed gross human rights violations and war crimes to be brought to justice.

Al Mezan stresses the importance of bringing to an end the culture of immunity in relation to violations of human rights and IHL in the oPt.

End