



Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'Homme

ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE NON GOUVERNEMENTALE AYANT STATUT CONSULTATIF AUPRES DES NATIONS UNIES, DE L'UNESCO,
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International Federation
for Human Rights

Federación Internacional
de los Derechos Humanos

الغدرالية الدولية لحقوق الانسان

Press Release

Occupied Palestinian Territories

Hamas – Fatah : FIDH's mission calls for Dialogue

After meeting with Hamas and Fatah, FIDH calls for negotiations and urges the creation of an independent commission of investigation

Paris, 17th July 2007 - Following the events which occurred in Gaza over the past weeks, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) sent, from 9 to 13 July 2007, a high-ranking delegation comprising of Driss El Yazami, Secretary-General of FIDH and Michel Tubiana, Honorary President of the French League for Human Rights. The delegation was joined in Gaza by Raji Sourani, Vice-President of FIDH and Director of the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR).

FIDH first wishes to emphasize the difficulties faced by its representatives to enter Gaza, which almost led to the cancellation of the mission. These difficulties were only overcome thanks to the efficient intervention of one of FIDH's affiliated organizations in Israel, Bt'selem. Nothing can justify the attitude of the Israeli government that increasingly opposes and imposes rigorous prohibitions upon the work of NGOs.

During their visit to Gaza, the members of the mission met with three senior Hamas officials, Ismail Haniyeh, deposed Prime Minister, Said Siam, former Minister of Interior, and Dr. Mahmoud Al-Zahar, former Minister of Foreign Affairs. They also met with Faysal Abou Shahla, member (Fatah) and Head of the human rights Committee of the Palestinian Legislative Council (CLP).

In Ramallah, the FIDH mission was received by Saadi El Krunz, the Secretary of the Palestinian Cabinet and Minister for Transport (Fatah), and also by Shawan Jabarin, Director-General of the Al-Haq Association, FIDH affiliate member in the West Bank. The mission also met in Jerusalem with Rachel Benziman, Director of another of its member organizations, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) and the delegation of the European Commission as well as the Consul General of France.

The members of the mission conclude, through dialogue with each of the various parties that occurred in each meeting, that only an impartial commission of inquiry could reliably determine the recent series of events, and those responsible for them, that captured the lives of 148 (of which 36 were civilians) and injured at least 700. FIDH firmly condemns the events which occurred during this period, and in particular between 10 and 14th of July and led to serious human rights violations, including extra-judiciary and summary executions.

In any case, FIDH calls on the parties concerned to respect the rule of law, democracy and human rights. It condemns the death, as a result of torture, of Fadel Mohammed Saleem Dahmash who, after having been captured by the al-Quds Brigade, was handed over to the executive authorities and detained in Gaza's central prison, where he died on 10 July 2007. FIDH is concerned also by the release over the course of the past weeks of presidential decrees which purport to violate the Palestinian people's human rights and fundamental freedoms. A decree published on 20 June by President Abbas demands all Palestinian NGOs register a new; a requirement that suggests a looming repression of civil society organizations. In addition, a second decree dated 6 July considerably broadens the scope of military rule, notably placing the civil justice system under the authority of military justice, which constitutes a manifest violation of the rule of law. FIDH recognizes the declarations of the Palestinian Cabinet according to which the second decree has been withdrawn and calls for the abrogation of the first one.

FIDH considers that the prevailing conditions in Gaza cannot be solved militarily and it will only remain the Palestinian people living in Gaza who will continue to be the victims of the current situation. FIDH calls for political dialogue between all Palestinian parties with a view to re-establishing the normal functioning of Palestinian institutions. It expresses its support for the initiatives emerging from many sectors of Palestinian civil society, calling for dialogue between the political actors concerned.

Finally, FIDH stresses the importance of the responsibility of the international community and of the Israeli government.

In refusing to recognize the results of legislative elections, and in imposing crippling economic sanctions, the international community and the Israeli government have themselves attributed considerably to a deteriorating situation in Gaza. Israel's practice of arbitrarily arresting members of the Palestinian Parliament and Hamas ministers has further aggravated the situation.

FIDH calls upon the International Community, the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention and the European Union to lift the sanctions against the Palestinian people and in particular, to put an end to the blockade of the Gaza strip that prevents the crossing of people and goods.

No solution can be found unless all parties, without exception, are involved in negotiations to end the occupation and colonization of the Palestinian territories. It is not through an embargo on a portion of revenue owed by the Israeli government, nor through the potential liberation of 250 prisoners (although 9200 Palestinians, according even to Israeli government sources, are detained in Israel) that real political progress will be achieved based on the right of Israel to exist with certain and established borders and on the right of Palestinians to establish their own state in accordance with international resolutions.

Today, the Palestinian people continue to suffer the consequences of an occupation and of an interminable embargo. Several thousand people are unable to leave Rafah International Crossing Point, existing in inhumane conditions that have contributed to a number of deaths, and the inhabitants of Gaza and of the West Bank have restricted movement. Putting an end to the situation is of utmost urgency.

FIDH calls upon the State of Israel to act in conformity with its duties and obligations inferred by its status of an occupying power according to International Humanitarian Law and the Fourth Geneva Convention.

FIDH calls upon the Israeli authorities to immediately and without condition release the 43 elected members of the Palestinian Legislative Council currently detained in Israel.

FIDH directly and through its member organizations, will continue to closely monitor the evolution of the grave situation in the OPT and the internal Palestinian situation.

At last, FIDH reminds all the parties that the lack of implementation of the International Humanitarian Law and the Fourth Geneva Convention is responsible for this deeply worsening situation.

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