



Palestinian Centre for Human Rights

www.pchrgaza.org

Fact Sheet

19 October 2011

Israeli Attacks on Palestinian Fishermen in Gaza Sea

This fact sheet¹ covering the period between 01 February 2011 and 30 September 2011 shows that there was a remarkable increase in the cases of Israeli attacks on the Palestinian fishermen and their property. The Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) documented 67 violations committed by the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) against Palestinian fishermen. PCHR documented 40 incidents in which IOF fired at fishermen, including five incidents in which eight fishermen were wounded and transferred to hospitals for medical treatment. In addition, PCHR documented five incidents in which IOF chased Palestinian fishermen at sea. In these incidents, IOF arrested 18 fishermen. PCHR documented also 14 incidents in which IOF confiscated and/ or damaged fishing equipment and boats.²

- **The Right to Life and Security of Person**

The Israeli attacks against the Palestinian fishermen in the Gaza Strip constitute a flagrant violation of the rules of the international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Article 3 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War prohibits violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment, torture, taking of hostages and outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment. Additionally, Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights state that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. The Israeli military committed violations against Palestinian fishermen at sea when these fishermen did not impose any threats to the Israeli naval troops. These fishermen were exercising their right to work and they were looking for their living within the territorial waters of the Gaza Strip when they were indiscriminately fired at by IOF.

¹ This fact sheet issued by PCHR is the third of its kind. It addresses violations carried out by IOF against Palestinian fishermen in the Gaza Strip while carrying out their work. For more details, see Fact Sheets at www.pchrgaza.org.

² There are approximately 8,200 fishermen and workers in the fishing sector in the Gaza Strip. These fishermen and workers provide for approximately 50,000 dependents. There are 1,249 boats distributed among the different areas of the Gaza Strip. For more details on the size of fishing equipment in the Gaza Strip, see "Fact Sheets" the Israeli Attacks on Palestinian Fishermen at Gaza Sea, at www.pchrgaza.org.

First: 8 Fishermen Wounded at Sea

IOF gunboats deployed at sea continued to target Palestinian fishermen at sea. PCHR documented 40 incidents in which IOF fired at Palestinian fishermen at sea off the Gaza shore during the reporting period, the most prominent of which were in July, when 13 firing incidents took place. As a result, eight fishermen were wounded in these incidents as detailed below:

- On 16 March 2011, IOF opened fire at a group of fishermen off al-Waha resort's shore, northwest of Beit Lahia. As a result, Yasser Nasser Fadel Bakr, 19, from Gaza City, was wounded by a bullet to the right side. He was immediately transferred by a boat to Gaza seaport and was then transported by to Shifa Hospital for medical treatment.
- At 20:00 on 26 May 2011, IOF opened fire at Palestinian boats off Khan Yunis shore, due to which, three fishermen were wounded:
 1. Ra'ed Yusef Abu Oda, wounded to the left thigh;
 2. His brother, Mohammed Yusef Abu Oda, suffered from nervous shock; and
 3. Nedal Sharif al-Sharif Bakr, sustained a fracture to the left hand finger.

They are all from al-Shati' refugee camp in Gaza City.

- At 21:00 on 02 June 2011, IOF opened fire at fishing boats off Rafah's shore. As a result, Ahmed Abu Selmiya, 23, from Rafah, was wounded by a bullet to the left hand. Abu Selmiya was transferred to the European Hospital in Khan Yunis.
- At 10:30 on 15 August 2011, IOF opened fire at fishing boats off Beit Lahia's shore. Yassin Ali Yassin Zayed, 41, from Beit Lahia, was wounded by a bullet to the right leg as a result. He was transported to Shifa Hospital for treatment. In his testimony to PCHR, Zayed said that on that day, he and his son Mohammed, 16, went to fish off Beit Lahia's shore. They started their work 300 meters away from the coastal border fence and dropped the net into the water. At approximately 10:30, IOF opened fire at the Palestinian fishermen, due to which Zayed was wounded by a bullet to the right leg and transported to Shifa Hospital for treatment.
- At 06:30 on 11 September 2011, IOF opened fire at fishing boats off Beit Lahia' shore. As a result, Mohammed Soheil Bakr, 17, was wounded by a bullet to the right thigh and Khader Hassan Bakr, 29, was wounded by a bullet to the left hand. They were transported to the hospital for treatment.

Second: Arresting Fishermen and Confiscating Fishing Tools

During the reporting period, PCHR documented five incidents in which IOF chased Palestinian fishermen and 18 of them. PCHR documented also six incidents of confiscation of fishing tools.

Arresting Fishermen

- At approximately 11:00 on 19 February 2011, an Israeli gunboat chased three fishermen aboard a small fishing boat 3 kilometers off Khan Yunis shore in the southern Gaza Strip. IOF fired at the boat, ordered the fishermen to stop, take their clothes off and swim towards the gunboat, which was 20 meters away and they did. IOF then transported the fishermen to Ashdod Seaport inside Israel. The fishermen were detained and questioned before they were released at approximately 21:00 on the same day. IOF kept the fishing boat and equipment. The fishermen are: Mostafa Hijazi Saleh al-Lahham, 42; Hijazi Hani Hijazi al-Lahham, 27; and Mahmoud Hassan Saleh al-Lahham, 30. They are all from al-Mawasi area in Khan Yunis.

- At approximately 10:00 on 20 March 2011, IOF arrested Nasser Fadel Bakr, 45, and his son 'Allam Nasser Bakr, 15, from al-Shati' refugee camp, as they were on board their boat approximately two miles from the Sheikh Ejleen's shore. IOF obliged the fishermen to sail to Ashdod Seaport. IOF kept the boat and released the fishermen at approximately 05:00 on the following day via Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing.

- At approximately 06:00 on 23 June 2011, IOF arrested Mohammed Mohammed Ibrahim al-Bardaweel, 22, and his brother Isma'il, 18, while carrying out their work off the fishing port in Rafah, approximately 2.8 nautical miles away. They were forced to jump and swim a distance of 200 meters towards the gunboat. After boarding the gunboat, they were blindfolded, handcuffed and transported to Ashdod Seaport. The fishermen were questioned and then released at approximately 19:00 on the same day via Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing.

- At approximately 05:30 on 25 August 2011, IOF arrested Mohammed Salah Mohammed Abu Riyala, 21; Hazem Saleh Abu Riyala, 19; and Mohammed Saleh Abu Riyala, 23, while they were fishing off al-Waha resort's shore in Gaza City. They were released at approximately 19:00 on the same day.

- At approximately 06:30 on 11 September 2011, two Israeli gunboats off al-Waha resort's shore in the northern Gaza Strip surrounded two Palestinian fishing boats, as eight fishermen were aboard. IOF opened fire at the fishermen, arrested them and transported them to Ashdod Seaport. The

fishermen are: Hassan Khader Bakr, 53; his sons Khader, 29; Ja'far, 27; Mohammed, 21; in addition to 'Allam Nasser Fadel Bakr, 16; Khalil Jawhar Khalil Bakr, 21; Mohammed Majed Fadel Bakr, 29; and Mohammed Soheil Bakr, 17. At approximately 18:00 on the same day, IOF released all of the fishermen.³

Confiscation of Fishing Boats

During the reporting period, IOF confiscated six fishing boats while their owners were sailing at sea.⁴

- On 19 February 2011, IOF confiscated a fishing boat belonging to Saqer Riyad Mohammed Mansour while fishing off Khan Yunis shore. Besides, three fishermen on board the boat were arrested and transported to Ashdod Seaport. They were questioned before being released on the same day. On 03 March 2011, PCHR sent a written notice upon an official power of attorney to the Israeli Ministry of Defense for demanding release of the boat. On 11 April 2011, PCHR sent a complaint to the legal advisers of the Israeli Ministry of Defense and the Navy. The Navy sent a "bond" to be signed. Mansour signed the bond, which states that he will not exceed the limit allowed for fishing. Thus, IOF returned the boat in the mid August 2011.
- On 20 March 2011, the Israeli naval forces confiscated a boat belonging to Mahmoud Mohammed Abu Hweidi, from Gaza. They also arrested Nasser Fadel Bakr and his son 'Allam, who were sailing off the Sheikh Ejleen's shore in Gaza City.
- On 28 July 2011, the Israeli naval forces confiscated a boat belonging to Imad Mohammed Hamada while he was fishing off al-Nussairat shore in the central Gaza Strip.
- On 25 August 2011, the Israeli naval forces confiscated a boat belonging to Mahdi Mohammed Abu Riyala while fishing off al-Sudaniya shore in the northern Gaza Strip.
- On 11 September 2011, the Israeli naval forces confiscated two boats belonging to Hassan Bakr and Soheil Bakr, both from Gaza City.

Third: Damages to Boats and Fishing Tools

³ For more details, see PCHR's press release on 14 September 2011 on www.pchrgaza.org.

⁴ PCHR received a number of complaints filed by the owners of the boats trapped by IOF. PCHR keeps the names of the owners. PCHR's Legal Aid Unit has followed up the complaints filed by the boats' owners.

During the reporting period, PCHR documented firing incidents, which resulted in heavy damages to eight fishing boats, in addition to damages to fishing tools. The International Boat Oliva, which monitors the situation at Gaza seashore, was subject to two attacks that resulted in heavy damages to the boat and full damage to its motor.

- On 26 May 2011, an Israeli gunboat approached to a distance of 3 meters from a boat belonging to Ra'ed Yousef Abu 'Ouda. The Israeli gunboat hit the boat twice. The fishing boats was damaged.

The Boat of Ra'ed Yusef Abu Oda that was damaged on 26 May 2011

- At approximately 10:00 on 21 June 2011, IOF opened fire at two fishing boats at a distance of two miles offshore. The boats belong to Abdul Fattah Monther Bakr, 21; and Mohammed Sobhi Bakr, 47, from Gaza City. The two boats' motors were completely damaged as a result.

The boat of Abdul Fattah Monther Bakr that was fired at by IOF on 21 June 2011

- At approximately 06:00 on 23 June 2011, IOF opened fire at Mohammed Mohammed Ibrahim al-Bardaweel, 22; and his brother Isma'il, 18, who were on board a boat at a distance of approximately 2.8 nautical miles off Rafah's shore. The boat's motor was damaged as a result.
- At approximately 06:30 on 04 July 2011, the Israeli naval forces opened fire at a boat belonging to Mohammed Abdul Razeq Bakr, 41, from Gaza City. The boat was heavily damaged as it was hit by seven bullets.
- At approximately 09:30 on 13 July 2011, Israeli gunboats opened fire at seven fishing boats⁵ while carrying out their work. As a result, the fishing boats were heavily damaged.

IOF's Attacks on the International Boat Oliva

The Israeli naval forces attacked the international boat "Oliva,"⁶ which monitors the Israeli attacks against the Palestinian fishermen while carrying out their work at Gaza

⁵ PCHR keeps the names of the owners of the fishing boats that were fired at by IOF at sea on 13 July 2011.

⁶ The launch of the international boat Oliva was declared under the umbrella of the Spanish Civil Peace Service on 20 April 2011. Oliva began its first monitoring mission at Gaza seashore on 08 June 2011. It is a project to monitor and document the Israeli attacks against the Palestinian fishermen while

seashore. During the reporting period, PCHR documented that Oliva was subject to four attacks that resulted in heavy damage, while Oliva's crew consisting of international activists and the captain were attacked by IOF as well.⁷

- On 14 July 2011, the Israeli gunboats opened fire at Oliva Boat. As a result, heavy damage was caused to the boat. According to investigations conducted by PCHR, at 09:00 on Thursday, 14 July 2011, IOF attacked the boat using water hoses. The boat was filled up with water and its radio and motor were damaged.
- On 20 July 2011, IOF opened fire at Oliva boat, heavily damaging it. This attack coincided with similar attacks launched by IOF against Palestinian fishing boats.

Table (1): Israeli attacks against Palestinian Fishermen during the Reporting Period

Description	Firing incidents	Persons wounded	Arrests	Persons arrested	Confiscation of fishing tools	Damage to fishing tools	Number of violations
February	2		1	3	1		
March	4	1	1	2	1		
April	4				1		
May	2	3				1	
June	5	1	1	2		2	
July	13					3	
August	4	1	1	3	1		
September	6	2	1	8	2	2	
Number of violations	40	8	5		6	8	67

carrying out their work. PCHR participates in this project with Gaza Fishing and Marine Sports Association, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees and the Coordinating Committee of Popular Resistance with the support of dozens of local and international organizations. The crew consists of international activists from Italy, Sweden, USA, UK and Spain. PCHR supervised the training of the crew in the legal field and methods of collecting and documenting the Israeli attacks against the crew at Gaza seashore.

⁷ For more information, see PCHR's press releases on the Israeli Navy's Attacks on Oliva Boat in Gaza Waters issued on 14 and 20 July 2011 at www.pchrgaza.com.