

# **Assassination of Palestinians ... An Israeli Official Policy**

**Report on Extra-Judicial killings Committed by the Israeli Occupation Forces**



September 29, 2000 – April 25, 2001

## **The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights**

**Consultative Status with the ECOSOC of the United Nations  
Affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists – Geneva  
Member of the International Federation for Human Rights – Paris  
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## **Introduction:**

This report highlights one of the most horrible aspects of the excessive use of force committed by the Israeli occupation forces against Palestinian civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories since the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada: Assassinations. Assassinations are usually carried out by elite units of the Israeli occupation forces, which are called special units, death teams, and sometimes *Al-Musta'reboun* (Arabianizers).<sup>1</sup> In three cases, combat helicopters were used to target the victims.

The Israeli occupation forces resorted to the assassination policy in the early stages of the Al-Aqsa Intifada by relying on the justification that Israel is in "an armed conflict" that permits it to assassinate those who attack Israelis or plans to carry out "terrorist" attacks against Israeli soldiers and civilians. In some cases of these extra-judicial killings, it was easy to arrest targeted persons without any resistance. However, by killing these persons, the Israeli occupation forces apparently aimed at terrifying the Palestinian people and at retaliating against those who were allegedly engaged in military attacks against Israeli targets. For example, Jamal 'Abdel-Raziq and Hani Abu Bakra, both from Rafah, were killed at close range on November 22, 2000 and December 14, 2000 respectively when Israeli occupation soldiers were in a position to arrest them.

High-ranking Israeli decision-makers and the military judiciary fully support the assassination policy. After an officer of Force 17 (the Palestinian President's Guard) was assassinated on February 13, 2001, former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak praised the operation, stating that it was part of the policy of Israel to combat those "who threaten the security of Jews." In his comment on the death of two Israelis in Tulkarm, former Israeli Deputy Defense Minister Ephraim Sneh said: "We will continue to target terrorists accurately ... There is no magical cure in this war, but carrying out specific operations against terrorists engaged in attacks is the most effective means."<sup>2</sup> When he was asked whether Israel adopted an assassination policy against Palestinians, Brigadier General Beni Gantz, the commander of the Israeli occupation forces in the West Bank, said: "You said 'assassination', not me. We act out of necessity, and we will not stop acting this way as long as there are threats." Israeli Chief of Staff Shaul Mofaz quoted the Israeli military Attorney General when

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<sup>1</sup>An elite unit of the Israeli occupation forces whose members disguise themselves in Palestinian uniform and enter Palestinian communities to kill or to arrest Palestinians. This unit was established during the first Intifada, 1987-1993, during which it killed dozens of Palestinians. On October 12, 2000, Palestinian police arrested two members of the unit in Ramallah when the members were on their way to attack Palestinians. The members of the unit were detained in a police station in the city. However, dozens of angry Palestinians attacked and killed them despite all efforts made by policemen to protect them.

<sup>2</sup>*Al-Ayyam* daily local newspaper, January 25, 2001, based on a report by France Press Agency, "Israel Pledges to Continue Targeting Extremist Palestinians."

he said that “the Israeli occupation forces are authorized and allowed by the Israeli military law to assassinate “enemies” in Palestinian areas in exceptional or unusual cases in order to protect the lives of people and when there is no other option...The Israeli army will continue to use all means, including assassinations.”<sup>3</sup> Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak stated: “If there are people who shoot at us to kill us, our only option will be to respond. A country under terrorist threats has to confront this.”<sup>4</sup>

The Israeli government does not hesitate to claim responsibility for such crimes against Palestinian civilians. It claims that extra-judicial killings of whom it calls “terrorists” deter those who would commit “terrorist” acts.

In all cases of extra-judicial killings committed by the Israeli occupation forces, the Israeli government failed to prove that the victims were engaged in attacks against Israeli soldiers and settlers. These operations are usually carried out without any investigation, and after each operation, Israeli sources refer to the victim’s activities ambiguously. The Israeli government considers that targeting activists of Palestinian organizations is a successful policy since many activists from the Fatah Movement, from Hamas and from Islamic Jihad, which are accused by Israel of leading the Intifada, were killed. All extra-judicial killings took place in areas under full control of the Palestinian National Authority.

### ***Illegal Actions***

Assassinations and extra-judicial killings committed by the Israeli occupation forces violate international humanitarian law and internationally accepted human rights standards, particularly the right to life.

Article 3 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* provides that “[e]veryone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.”

Article 6(1) of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* provides:

Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.

Article 3(1) of the *Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War* provides:

[T]he following acts are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever...:

(a) Violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture...

<sup>3</sup>The report of the Special Committee to Investigate the Human Rights Situation in the OPT, established by ECOSOC, March 16, 2001, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

Principle 9 of the *Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials* provides:

Law enforcement officials shall not use firearms against persons except in self-defense or defense of others against imminent threat of death or serious injury, to prevent perpetration of a particularly serious crime involving grave threat to life, to arrest a person presenting such a danger and resisting their authority, or to prevent his or her escape, and only when less extreme means are insufficient to achieve these objectives. In any event, intentional lethal use of firearms may only be made when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life.

The *Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal and Summary Executions* prohibit all extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions. Principle 1 provides:

Governments shall prohibit by law all extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions and shall ensure that any such executions are recognized as offences under their criminal laws, and are punishable by appropriate penalties which take into account the seriousness of such offences. Exceptional circumstances including a state of war or threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency may not be invoked as a justification of such executions.

Moreover, extra-legal killings committed by the Israeli occupation forces against Palestinian activists in the Occupied Palestinian Territories violate *Convention (IV) Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land*, signed at Hague in 1907, upon which Israel depends in its defence of its military policies in the OPT.<sup>5</sup> Article 23 of the Convention provides:

- [I]t is especially forbidden: ...
- (b) To kill or wound treacherously individuals belonging to the hostile nation or army;
  - (c) To kill or wound an enemy who, having laid down his arms, or having no longer means of defense, has surrendered at discretion;
  - (d) To declare that no quarter will be given;
  - (e) To employ arms, projectiles, or material calculated to cause unnecessary suffering ...”

<sup>5</sup>Letters by the legal advisor of the Israeli army asserted that Israel was in confrontation with hostile forces and that the legal basis of operations carried out by the Israeli army was the international public law. In its response to two appeals by PCHR against actions carried out by the Israeli occupation forces against Palestinian property in the Gaza Strip, the Israeli attorney considered Convention (IV) Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land, signed at Hague in 1907 as a legal basis for these actions.

**All of this refutes claims by the Israeli occupation forces that their actions in the OPT are carried out for military necessities provided for in the Convention.**

In the period from September 29, 2000 to April 25, 2001, the Israeli occupation forces committed 13 assassinations<sup>6</sup> that targeted Palestinian political activists in area A, under full control of the Palestinian National Authority, resulting in the deaths of 22 Palestinians. In one of these operations, four Palestinians from Rafah were killed, and three were wounded. Furthermore, in three operations, 6 Palestinian bystanders were killed and some injured. On November 9, 2000, two Palestinian women were killed when the Israeli combat helicopters targeted Hussein 'Ebayyat, from Bethlehem. In the operation that targeted Jamal 'Abdel-Raziq, from Rafah, three Palestinian civilians were killed. In the operation that targeted Hani Abu Bakra, from Rafah, a Palestinian civilian was killed and three were wounded.

Assassinations are carried out by the Israeli occupation forces in the following means:

1. Shelling of the targeted person's car by a combat helicopter;
2. Firing at the targeted person by snipers from a short distance at military roadblocks;
3. Planting bombs in the targeted person's car that are detonated by remote control;
4. Firing at the targeted person from military sites;
5. Planting bombs in public phone cabins that are detonated by remote control; and
6. Planting bombs that are detonated by remote control in places of armed clashes.

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<sup>6</sup>This is the number of successful assassinations which the Israeli occupation forces during the period under study. However, there are some failed assassination attempts. For example, on February 20, 2001, an armed Palestinian group defeated an attempt by an undercover unit to assassinate a Hamas activist in Jenin.

1) Hussein Mohammed 'Ebayyat  
37, T'amra, Bethlehem



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On November 9, 2000, at approximately 11:45 local time, a combat helicopter of the Israeli occupation forces fired three rockets at a civilian car in Beit Sahour, killing one of its travelers and two female passerby, and wounding a number of other civilians. The driver was Hussein Mohammed 'Ebayyat, 37, from the village of Ta'amra near Bethlehem. A rocket exploded near the car, killing 'Aziza Dannoun Jobran, 52, and Rahma She'ibat, 50, both from Beit Sahour.

After the assassination, the spokesman of the Israeli occupation forces stated that "in an operation carried out by the Israel Defense Forces in Beit Sahour, IDF's helicopters fired rockets at a car of a prominent Fatah (Tanzim) activist. Pilots said that the hit was accurate. The activist was killed and his accompanying assistant was injured."

The Israeli occupation forces accused 'Ebayyat of having participated in shootings at "Gilo" settlement and in firing at Israeli occupation forces, which resulted in the killing of three Israeli soldiers.

In his testimony to the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment (LAW), an eyewitness, 'Emad Jamil Fares Dannoun, 22, from Beit Sahour, said:

"On November 9, 2000, at approximately 11:45 local time, while I was in my house in Beit Sahour, I heard the sounds of two heavy blasts a few seconds apart. I went out to see what happened. I saw a car, a dark gray Mitsubishi, on fire. I moved closer to the car. I saw a corpse behind the steering column; I knew later it was Hussein 'Ebayyat's body. Four meters away from the car, I saw the bodies of two women whom I could not identify, lying on the ground. To the north of the car, I saw a woman whose body was completely burnt, yet she was still alive. I knew later that she was my uncle's wife, 'Azziza Dannoun. The other woman was to the east of the car. It was clear that she was injured in the abdomen. Her chest was naked. She was bleeding, and she was moaning. I knew later that she was Rahma She'ibat. A few meters away, I saw Nazhmi She'ibat and his wife lying injured on the ground. Five minutes later, a Palestinian ambulance arrived at the area and took the injured to hospital."

2) Jamal ‘Abdel-Qader ‘Abdel-Raziq  
30, from Rafah



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On November 22, 2000, Israeli occupation troops in two tanks opened fire from their heavy machine guns on a Palestinian civilian car, Honda Civic, on the Rafah-Khan Yunis western road near the junction leading to Morag settlement in the northeast of Rafah. Jamal ‘Abdel-Qader ‘Abdel-Raziq, 30, and ‘Awni Duheir, 38, both from Rafah, who were travelling in the targeted car, were killed. Two other Palestinians, Na’el Shehdeh El-Leddawi, 25, from Rafah, and Sami Nasser Abu Laban, 27, from Sheikh Radwan neighborhood in Gaza City, who were travelling in a taxi behind the targeted car, were also killed. The taxi driver, Nahedh Fouju, miraculously survived. He was sheltered by the steering column of his taxi. Israeli occupation soldiers arrested him. He was moved to an interrogation center at the Israeli Al-Majdal prison. The Israeli occupation forces moved the bodies of the four deceased into Gush Qatif settlement block before they handed them over to the Palestinian National Authority.

The spokesman of the Israeli occupation forces first claimed that the four Palestinians were activists of the military wing of Fatah Movement (Tanzim) intending to launch a military attack on “Morag” settlement. Then, the spokesman asserted that the operation was targeted Jamal ‘Abdel-Raziq, a Fatah activist in Rafah. The Israeli occupation forces accused ‘Abdel-Raziq of having been engaged in firing at Israeli occupation soldiers. According to Palestinian security services, Majdi Mackawi, 26, from Rafah, ‘Abdel-Raziq’s uncle, confessed that the operation was planned to assassinate his nephew.<sup>7</sup>

The taxi driver, Nahedh Fouju, from Rafah, the only survivor of the incident, said the following to PCHR:

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<sup>7</sup>On January 11, 2001, the Palestinian State Security Court sentenced Majdi Mohammed Ahmed Mackawi, 27, from Rafah, to death by firing squad, after he had been convicted of collaboration with Israel, and providing information that enabled Israeli security services to assassinate some Palestinian activists. On the following day, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat ratified the court’s decision. On January 13, 2001, Mackawi was sent to death in Gaza City.

“I was traveling in my taxi from Rafah to Khan Yunis. Two occupants were traveling with me to Fares fuel station on the main road to get fuel for their bakery. As soon as we arrived at Morag junction, an Israeli military jeep intercepted my taxi, so I stopped the taxi. Then, Israeli occupation soldiers at one side of the road and those in a tank on the other side opened fire on the taxi. I had shelter under the steering column. The two occupants who traveled with me were killed by live bullets. When fire ceased, Israeli occupation soldiers moved towards me and took me out of the taxi. They beat and insulted me. Then, they blindfolded me and tied my feet and hands. They took me to a settlement in Gush Qatif settlement block. I overheard Israeli occupation soldiers who were talking on wireless sets saying this, and I understand Hebrew. I stayed in the settlement for approximately two hours, during which Israeli soldiers insulted me and threatened to kill me. Then, they took me to Al-Majdal (Ashkelon) prison, where I was detained for six days in a dark cell and tortured. After that, they released me.”

An eyewitness<sup>8</sup> said that he was on his tract of land near the place of the incident. He said:

“A tank of the Israeli occupation forces was stationed on the northern side of a settlement road newly paved by these forces on the land of Dhuheir family, which connects Rafah-Khan Yunis road with Morag settlement in the east. Two other tanks of the Israeli occupation forces were stationed on the southern side of the above-mentioned road. The three tanks were only a few meters away from Rafah-Khan Yunis road... I saw a troop carrier coming from the newly paved settlement road that suddenly crossed Rafah-Khan Yunis road before a black car (it was known later that the car was a Honda Civic) and a white Mercedes, travelling from Rafah to Khan Yunis. When the black car came near the tanks, Israeli occupation troops in two of the three tanks started to shoot intensively at it from a distance of some meters only. I lay down on the ground and started to observe what was going on. The shooting lasted continuously for almost four minutes. When the shooting stopped, three jeeps of the Israeli occupation forces came from the above-mentioned road, on which the tanks were stationed. Israeli occupation troops got out of the jeeps and pulled the bodies out from the car and put them in a jeep, and then they traveled towards Morag settlement.”

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<sup>8</sup>Names of eyewitnesses are kept by PCHR.



3) Ibrahim ‘Abdel-Karim Bani ‘Oudeh  
34, Tammoun, Jenin



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On November 23, 2001, the Israeli occupation forces assassinated Ibrahim ‘Abdel-Karim Bani ‘Oudeh, 34, from the village of Tammoun in Jenin. At approximately 12:30 local time, while Bani ‘Oudeh was driving his car, a Subaru, near Al-Salam mosque opposite to Eibal Mountain in Nablus, the car exploded, and Bani ‘Oudeh was instantly killed. Bani ‘Oudeh had been a political prisoner in the jails of the Palestinian National Authority for three years. He was released two weeks before his death.

The spokesman of the Israeli occupation forces claimed that Bani ‘Oudeh was making a bomb which exploded in his car. Nevertheless, ‘Allan Bani ‘Oudeh, cousin of the victim, who gave himself up to Palestinian security services in the aftermath of the incident, said that the explosion was a planned assassination by Israeli intelligence.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>On December 7, 2000, the Palestinian State Security Court sentenced ‘Allan Bani ‘Oudeh, 24, from Jenin, to death by hanging, after he had been convicted of participation in the assassination of his cousin Ibrahim Bani ‘Oudeh. On January 12, 2001, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat ratified the court’s decision, and on the following day, Bani ‘Oudeh was sent to death by firing squads in Nablus.

4) Anwar Mahmoud Hamran  
28, 'Arrabeh, Jenin



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On December 11, 2000, the Israeli occupation forces shot dead Anwar Mahmoud Hamran, 28, from the village of 'Arrabeh in Jenin. Hamran, a student at the Al-Quds Open University, was near the campus at approximately 13:30 local time when the Israeli occupation forces opened fire at him from a military post of these forces on Jerzim Mount, approximately 500m away from the campus. The victim received 19 bullets throughout the body. Field information asserts that the incident was an assassination of Hamran, apparently because of his political activities. Hamran was an activist of the Islamic Jihad and had been detained by the Palestinian National Authority since October 17, 1998. He was released 6 weeks before his death.

The spokesman of the Israeli occupation forces denied any responsibility of his forces for the death of Hamran, claiming that "an Israeli military site was fired at, and the Palestinian who fired was identified, so Israeli soldiers fired at him."<sup>10</sup> However, investigations by human rights organizations showed that the Israeli occupation forces were not fired upon, and that Hamran was on the side of the road, holding his books.

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<sup>10</sup>Amnesty International's report, Israel and the Occupied Territories, February 2001, p. 13.

5) Yousef Ahmed Abu Sawi  
28, Al-Kahder, Bethlehem

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On December 12, 2000, the Israeli occupation forces shot dead Yousef Ahmed Abu Sawi, 28, from Al-Khader village near Bethlehem. At approximately 14:30 local time, Abu Sawi was in front of his house when Israeli occupation soldiers fired at him from their military sites on hills near the village of Al-Khader, approximately 200m away from the house of the victim. Abu Sawi received 17 live bullets throughout the body and immediately died. According to eyewitnesses, the area did not witness any shooting incidents when Abu Sawi was shot dead.

The victim's father, Ahmed Mahmoud Abu Sawi, 62, said the following to the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment (LAW):

“On December 12, 2000, at approximately 14:30 (local time), I left my son, Yousef, praying near Solomon Pools, approximately 50m away from my house and went home. Then, I heard sounds of intensive shooting coming from Road 60 where Israeli occupation soldiers are always present, approximately 200m away from my house. I went out to see what was going on. I found my son on the ground wounded, approximately 10m away from home. Then, neighbors came and assisted me in moving him to Beit Jala Hospital.”

6) ‘Abbas ‘Othman El-‘Oweiwi  
26, Hebron



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At approximately 14:20, the Israeli occupation forces fired at ‘Abbas Ahmed El-‘O’weiwi, 26, killing him with three live bullets in the head and the chest. Eyewitnesses stated that the incident was an assassination of the deceased who was in front of his commercial store in Wadi Al-Tuffah Street in the center of Hebron. The commercial store is 400m away from military sites of the Israeli occupation forces in the part of Hebron under the control of the Israeli occupation forces. Snipers of these forces shot at the martyr from guns equipped with silencers when there were no clashes in the area.

El-‘Oweiwi was a Hamas activist and was arrested several times by the Israeli occupation forces. He was also arrested several times by the Palestinian National Authority, the last of which was one week before the start of Al-Aqsa Intifada. He was released on the first day of the Intifada.

In his testimony to the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment (LAW), an eyewitness, ‘Abdel-Rahman Bader, 46, an engineer from Hebron, said:

“On December 14, 2000, at approximately 14:20 (local time), I was in my office in Al-‘Adel Street at the center of Hebron, approximately 400m away from the part of the city under control of the Israeli occupation forces, when I heard sounds similar to those of fireworks. Immediately, I looked at the street from the window of my office. I saw ‘Abbas El-‘Oweiwi, whom I knew very well as his shop was in the same building, lying on the ground, approximately 3m away from the sidewalk. There were some young men who were running to offer him help. He was evacuated in a taxi to hospital. Later, I knew that he died from wounds by live bullets. I did not hear sounds of shooting when ‘Abbas fell onto the ground.”

7) Hani Hussein Abu Bakra  
32, Rafah



On December 14, 2000, at about 8:30 local time, an Israeli military jeep and tank were stationed on Salah El-Din Street (the main road between the north and south of the Gaza Strip), near the junction leading to the town of Deir El-Balah via the road known as Al-Heker. An Israeli soldier in the tank signaled to a passing Palestinian taxi (a yellow Hyundai van) driven by Hani Hussein Hassan Abu Bakra, 32, from Rafah, to stop. Seven Palestinians were in the car and on their way to Gaza City. Then, three Israeli occupation soldiers appeared on the tank, which was about 1.5 meters away from the taxi. Another seven Israeli occupation soldiers got out of the jeep, pointing their guns towards the taxi. They approached the taxi from the left and from behind. One of them asked the driver to show his identity card. When the driver moved his hand to produce his identity card, the Israeli soldiers positioned on the tank then opened fire on the taxi. Then, the Israeli occupation soldiers surrounding the taxi moved back, and again opened fire on the driver and the taxi for more than two minutes. As a result, the driver, Hani Abu Bakra, was killed, and another four in the taxi were wounded, including ‘Abdullah ‘Eissa Gannan, 40, from Khan Yunis, who died from his wound on December 23, 2001.

Immediately afterwards, Israeli occupation forces ordered all those who were in the taxi, including the wounded, to get out. They released a girl who was in the taxi, and transferred the three wounded by military jeep to an unknown location. Another three Palestinians in the car, including a wounded man, Mousa Mohammed Abu Mustafa, 54, from Khan Yunis, were all handcuffed and then moved by military jeep to a military post at the junction leading to Kissufim Crossing at the eastern border of the Gaza Strip. Abu Bakra’s body was handed over to the Palestinian side at approximately 12:00 local time on the same day.

After the assassination, the spokesman of the Israeli occupation forces stated that “during an attempt to arrest a Hamas activist in the Gaza Strip, the terrorist tried to fire from his pistol, so the unit (of the Israeli army) opened fire and killed him.” However, eyewitnesses refuted this claim. In his testimony to PCHR, Ashraf Tulba Khamis El-Farra, 23, from Khan Yunis, who survived the incident, said:

“On December 14, 2001, I was traveling in a taxi, a yellow Hyundai van, from Khan Yunis to Gaza City. The taxi was full with occupants. When we arrived at the junction leading to Deir El-Balah, at approximately 08:30 local time, I saw a tank and a jeep of the Israeli forces. Some Israeli soldiers got out of them and ordered us to stop. The driver stooped the taxi. Suddenly, eight Israeli soldiers moved closer to the taxi. A soldier moved towards the driver and talked to him in Hebrew. I heard the driver asking the soldier whether he wanted him to show his identity card or the taxi license. When the driver put his hand in his jacket pocket, he was fired on and killed. Then, we lay down to on the floor of the taxi to avoid being shot. I was not able to raise my head for three minutes. When the Israeli soldiers stopped firing, they opened the doors of the taxi, insulted us and ordered us to get out of the taxi with our faces to the ground. Then, I heard one of the occupants, a girl, crying. Israeli occupation soldiers ordered her to leave the area and I do not know where she went. A few minutes later, they ordered us to get into a military jeep. Then I saw the driver’s body and three who were wounded in the shoulder, the abdomen and the face. They took us all in the military jeep to a military site at Kissufim junction. There, they ordered us to get out of the jeep and to sit on the ground with our faces to a wall, although it was raining. An hour later, an Israeli military vehicle arrived at the place and took Hussam El-Astal, a wounded man from Abu Mustafa family, and me to Kissufim settlement inside the Green Line. There, they put me with Abu Mustafa into a room. Then, an Israeli soldier took me to another room, where I was interrogated by an intelligence officer. He asked me about the incident and my work, and a photographer took a photo for me. I had stayed in the settlement for approximately two hours. Then, we were all released, and an ambulance took the driver’s body and the injured man to hospital.”

In her testimony to PCHR, Ghada ‘Abdel-Karim Daoud, 20, from Khan Yunis refugee camp, a student of the College of Education in Gaza City, who survived the incident, said:

“On December 14, 2001, I was traveling in a taxi, a yellow Hyundai van, from Khan Yunis to Gaza City. Seven occupants in addition to the driver traveled in the taxi. At approximately 08:30 (local time), we arrived at the junction leading to Deir El-Balah. When the taxi was got closer to a military roadblock there, an Israeli soldier got out of a military jeep, which was near a tank, ordered us to stop. The driver stopped the taxi. Israeli soldiers pointed their guns at the taxi. They got closer to the side of the taxi near the driver. A soldier talked to the driver in Hebrew. I heard the driver replying: “the identity card?” In the meanwhile, three soldiers on the tank were pointing their guns at the taxi. Suddenly, soldiers opened fire on the taxi and the driver. The shooting lasted for three minutes, during which I took shelter under the back seat. When Israeli soldiers stopped firing, I heard one of them talking in Hebrew. I saw the two persons who were sitting in front of me and the person who was

sitting near me getting out of the taxi. I did not see the other persons who, as I think, had already got out of the taxi. I remained in the taxi until a soldier ordered me to get out. When I got out, I saw three persons lying on the ground near the taxi. Two meters away, there were three other persons in the same situation. Then, a soldier ordered me to sit on the ground, and another one ordered me to open my bag and searched it. Later, they ordered me to stand near (approximately) 30 people who were standing in three lines near five cars stopped at the side of the road. I stood in the line of girls. I saw three persons lying near the taxi I traveled in, one was wounded in the finger and the head, the second, a policeman, was injured by shrapnel from glass and the third was injured in the right side. Then, an Israeli military jeep arrived at the place and Israeli soldiers took the policeman and the other wounded young man, tied their hands and ordered them to get into the jeep. The others were ordered to get into another jeep without their hands having been tied. Then, they ordered all of us in the lines to go to Deir El-Balah. I traveled in a taxi to Gaza City, without having known what happened to the driver. Later, I saw two Palestinian ambulances approximately 15m from the roadblock, but Israeli occupation soldiers denied their access to the place of the incident to move the wounded.”

8) Thabet Ahmed Thabet  
49, Tulkarm



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On December 31, 2000, at approximately 10:00 local time, Israeli occupation forces assassinated the Secretary of Fatah Movement in Tulkarm, Dr. Thabet Ahmed Thabet, 49, from Ramin village and resident of Tulkarm. Dr. Thabet was in his car in front of his house in the southwest part of Tulkarm when Israeli occupation soldiers opened fire on him from a distance of more than 250 meters. Eyewitnesses said that Israeli occupation soldiers in a military truck at a junction leading to a military roadblock suddenly opened fire on Dr. Thabet's car. Dr. Thabet was wounded by several bullets in the chest and was evacuated to Tulkarm Hospital, where he was pronounced dead. Israeli occupation forces did not deny responsibility for the assassination of Dr. Thabet. Major General Giora Eiland, Head of the Operations of the Israeli army, submitted a document to the Israeli High Court in response to an appeal submitted to the court by Dr. Siham Thabet, the victim's wife, regarding the assassination of her husband. According to the document, Dr. Thabet "was actually a physician, but his role as a leader of a military cell of Tanzim, who gives orders to his men to launch attacks, denies him the civilian character."<sup>11</sup> It is worth mentioning that the appeal was rejected.

In his testimony to the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment (LAW), an eyewitness said:

"On Sunday, December 31, 2001, at approximately 10:00 local time, while I was working in my workshop in the southwestern neighborhood, adjacent to Dr. Thabet's house in Tulkarm, I saw him going out home and getting in his car. Very soon, I heard sounds of shooting. I went out of my workshop, and saw Dr. Thabet's car being hit by a hail of live bullets. I looked at the source of fire on the opposite side, on the western side of Taybeh junction. I saw an Israeli military truck from which Israeli soldiers were shooting. The shooting lasted for five minutes, during which Dr. Thabet was trying to move back to avoid the live bullets that penetrated his car and hit him. After the perpetrators left the area, I got closer to the car and I discovered that Dr. Thabet was hit by several bullets."

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<sup>11</sup>The above source.



9) Mas'oud Hussein 'Ayyad  
57, Al-Zaytoun, Gaza



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On February 13, 2001, at approximately 09:45 local time, an Israeli combat helicopter flew over Gaza City and fired three rockets at a Palestinian civilian car, a white Hyundai. This car was inside areas under the control of the Palestinian National Authority, traveling on Salah El-Din Street (the main road between the north and south of the Gaza Strip) on the way from Gaza City to Jabalya.

The direct hit on the vehicle killed its driver, Mas'oud Hussein 'Ayyad, 50, from Al-Zaytoun neighborhood in Gaza City. 'Ayyad was a major in Force 17 (the Palestinian Presidential Guard). 'Ayyad's body was removed from the scorched vehicle and transferred to Shifa' Hospital in Gaza City. According to Shifa' Hospital, 'Ayyad was wounded with shrapnel in the head and the body, burns of the head, ruptures of internal organs, and lacerations on the right hand. A passing Palestinian civilian was also wounded with shrapnel throughout the body. In addition, a number of passing Palestinian civilian cars were also damaged.

Israeli occupation forces took responsibility for the assassination of 'Ayyad, claiming that he was the head of Hizbullah in Gaza, and was responsible for launching mortars on "Netzarim" settlement. Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak praised the operation, considering it part of an Israeli policy to combat those who "threaten the security of Jews."

In his testimony to PCHR, an eyewitness said:

"At approximately 09:45 local time, I was sitting in front of a shop where I work, at Salah El-Din Street, near Jabalya. I saw a car, a white Hyundai, driven by a man in his 40s, wearing a kaffiyeh on his head. Then, I heard the sound of a heavy blast, and saw smoke raising from the front of the car. I heard a similar sound and saw a rocket hitting the car. Less than half a minute later, I saw a third rocket hitting the car. The explosions shattered the windows of my shop and my head was covered with pieces of glass. I saw the car burning. Immediately, I called an ambulance and a fire engine. Then, I took a fire extinguisher and tried to put the fire out.

A fire engine came from Jabalya and started to put fire out, and an ambulance came and evacuated the man, who apparently was dead. A car of our own was severely damaged in the attack.”

In his testimony to PCHR, another eyewitness said:

“On Tuesday, February 13, 2001, at approximately 09:45 (local time), while I was sitting in front of my shop at Salah El-Din Street, drinking coffee with some friends, I saw a white Hyundai passing before us, driven by a man who was wearing a white kaffiyeh on the head. Then, I heard a sound of a heavy explosion, and saw the car burning. Less than half a minute later, I heard sounds of two other explosions. Some citizens and I tried to get closer to the car to put the fire out. Approximately five minutes later, an ambulance and a number of fire engines arrived. After the fire had been put out, the man’s body was evacuated from the car and was transferred in the ambulance to hospital.”

10) Mahmoud Suleiman El-Madani  
25, Balata, Nablus



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On February 19, 2001, at approximately 12:30 local time, the Israeli forces committed yet another willful extra-judicial killing, this time against Mahmoud Suleiman El-Madani, 25, from Balatta refugee camp in Nablus. According to eyewitnesses, after El-Madani exited a mosque at the entrance of Balatta refugee camp, adjacent to the main Nablus-Ramallah road, a civilian car suddenly stopped nearby. Two armed persons in plainclothes exited the car and opened fire on El-Madani from a distance of only 10m. They then got in the car and fled the area. Eyewitnesses said that at the same time, Israeli forces positioned on Mount Jerzim opened fire, providing cover to protect the assassins and enabling them to flee. El-Madani was wounded with three live bullets in the chest and the abdomen. He was immediately evacuated to Rafidya Hospital in Nablus, where he was pronounced dead at approximately 18:00 local time. Later, Israeli occupation forces declared that an undercover unit committed the assassination. El-Madani was a political activist of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas).

11) Mohammed 'Attwa 'Abdel-'Aal  
26, Rafah



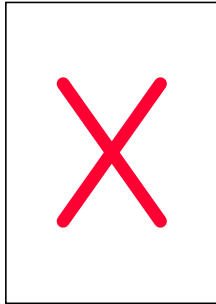
On April 2, 2001, at approximately 12:40 local time, Israeli combat helicopters flew over Rafah and fired three rockets at a Palestinian civilian car, a white civilian Peugeot Thunder, at Khaled Ben Al-Walid Street in Al-Barazil neighborhood, adjacent to the Egyptian border in the south of Rafah. Two rockets directly hit the civilian car, killing its driver, Mohammed 'Atwa 'Abdel-'Aal. The car was completely destroyed and 'Abdel-'Aal's body completely burnt. Furthermore, a taxi behind 'Abdel-'Aal's car was also destroyed. Its driver miraculously survived, as he and other passengers in the taxi fled as soon as they heard the first explosion. Additionally, two passing civilians, including an 11-year-old child who was on her way back from school, were evacuated to hospital after they suffered nervous breakdowns.

Israeli occupation forces claimed that 'Abdel-'Aal was a member of the military wing of the Islamic Jihad, and had been engaged in attacks on Israeli soldiers. Commenting on the assassination, former Israeli Minister of Transportation Ephraim Sneh called the operation "preemptive." He added that "Israel considers those who are engaged in terrorism as targets... we must target such persons if we want to combat violence resolutely."

In his testimony to PCHR, an eyewitness said:

"On Monday, April 2, 2001, while I was near my house, north of Khaled Ben Al-Walid Street in Rafah, I heard sounds of two helicopters flying over the area. I saw a car, a white Peugeot Thunder, and another car behind it, Mercedes. Then, I saw a shell falling near the right side of the first car, and another shell hitting the front part of the car, burning it. The back cabin of the car flew several meters back. Then, I saw occupants of the second car fleeing and seeking shelter among houses. Fear spread over the area. Approximately three minutes later, I saw people gathering around the burning car and attempting to rescue its occupants. Putting out the fire took approximately 20 minutes, after which people were able to retrieve the driver's burnt body, which was transferred to Al-Joneina Hospital in Rafah."

12) Eyad Mohammed Hardan  
24, 'Arrabeh, Jenin



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On April 5, 2001, the Israeli occupation forces assassinated Eyad Mohammed Hardan, 26, from 'Arrabeh near Jenin. At approximately 14:40 local time, Hardan was using a public phone across the street from the Palestinian Department of the Interior in Jenin, when the booth exploded, instantly killing him. Later, Israeli occupation forces claimed responsibility for Hardan's death. According to eyewitnesses, an Israeli helicopter was flying over the area when the explosion occurred.

The Israeli occupation forces claimed that Hardan was the leader of the military wing of the Islamic Jihad in the northern West Bank, and planned and carried out a number of attacks against Israelis, especially the suicide bombing in Mahane Yahuda inside Israel in 1998.

In his comment on Hardan's killing, former Israeli Minister of Transportation Ephraim Sneh stated that the death of Hardan "will largely undermine the activities of the organization." He added that Hardan was "known by Israeli security services for being engaged in a series of attacks against Israel...Hardan's hands were bloodstained, and his head was full of plans for more bloodshed."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>*Al-Hayat Al-Jadida* daily local newspaper, April 6, 2001.

12) Ramadan Ismail 'Azzam  
33, Rafah



14) Samir Sabri Zo'rob  
34, Rafah



15) Sa'di Mohammed El-Dabbas  
32, Rafah



16) Yasser Hmdan El-Dabbas  
18, Rafah



On April 25, 2001, at approximately 20:15 local time, a suspicious object exploded near the barbed wire fence marking the border between Rafah and Egypt when a group of young Palestinian men tried to check it. The four men were instantly killed as a result of the explosion. They are:

- 1) Ramadan Ismail 'Azzam, 33, from Tal Al-Sultan neighborhood in Rafah, a member of the Palestinian Preventive Security Service;
- 2) Samir Sabri Zo'rob, 34, from Zo'rob neighborhood in Rafah, a member of the Criminal Investigation Unit of Palestinian police;
- 3) Sa'di Mohammed El-Dabbas, 32, from Zo'rob neighborhood in Rafah; and
- 4) Yasser Hamdan El-Dabbas, 18, from Zo'rob neighborhood in Rafah, a taxi driver.

Moreover, three young men were injured:

- 1) Ziad Mustafa Sha'athe, 32, from Rafah refugee camp, injured by shrapnel in the right thigh;

- 2) Ayman El-Zatmeh, 24, from Rafah, injured by shrapnel in the head and neck and he suffering from partial paralysis as a result; and
- 3) Majdi 'Abdel-Ra'ouf Sha'ath, 37, from Rafah refugee camp, a taxi driver, injured by shrapnel in the left forearm.

According to PCHR's investigation and testimonies of eyewitnesses, on Wednesday morning, April 25, 2001, residents of Block "J" area in Rafah refugee camp had noticed two suspicious objects, one inside and the other outside the border with Egypt. A unit of Palestinian police, along with explosive ordnance disposal experts, came to the area and took the object that was outside the border, while the other object remained inside the border, which is under control of Israeli occupation forces. The suspicious object was like a triangle, measuring approximately 50cm on each side, and was covered with blinking lights. During the day, a number of boys gathered near the object, but they were not hurt. At approximately 20:15 local time, the suspicious object exploded while it was being checked. According to eyewitnesses, an Israeli helicopter flew over the area then, apparently detonating it by remote control. Immediately, ambulances came and evacuated the four killed and others who were injured. PCHR's field officer in Rafah reported that Israeli occupation soldiers fired at medical personnel while they were gathering the remains of Yasser El-Dabbas, preventing them from carrying out their work.

It is worth mentioning that the four murdered were activists of the Intifada, and were members of the Popular Resistance Committees of Fatah Movement, headed by Ramadan 'Azzam. Investigations proved that the bomb was planted in the area to target armed persons who used to fire at a military site of the Israeli occupation forces at the border.

Names of Palestinians Killed in Extra-Judicial Assassinations Committed by Israeli Occupation Forces

September 29, 2000 – April 25, 2001

No.	Name	Date	Age	Place of Residence	Method of Killing
1.	Hussein Mohammed 'Ebayyat	Nov. 9, 2000	37	T'amra, Bethlehem	An Israeli combat helicopter fired three rockets at his car
2.	'Azziza Dannoun Jobran	Nov. 9, 2000	52	Beit Sahour	Killed in the above incident, a passing civilian
3.	Rahma Rashid Sh'eibat	Nov. 9, 2000	50	Beit Sahour	Killed in the above incident, a passing civilian
4.	Jamal 'Abdel-Qader 'Abdel-Raziq	Nov. 22, 2000	30	Rafah	Israeli occupation soldiers, positioned at a military roadblock near Rafah, fired at his car after a tank intercepted it
5.	'Awni Ismail Duheir	Nov. 22, 2000	38	Rafah	The same incident
6.	Na'el Salem El-Leddawi	Nov. 22, 2000	22	Rafah	The same incident
7.	Sami Nasser Abu Laban	Nov. 22, 2000	29	Sheikh Radwan, Gaza	The same incident
8.	Ibrahim 'Abdel-Karim Bani 'Oudeh	Nov. 23, 2000	34	Tammoun, Jenin	A bomb in his car was detonated by remote control in Nablus
9.	Anwar Mahmoud Hamran	Dec. 11, 2000	28	'Arrabeh, Jenin	Shot by Israeli occupation soldiers positioned at a military site in Nablus



10.	Yousef Ahmed Abu Sawi	Dec. 2000	12,	28	Al-Khader, Bethlehem	Shot by Israeli occupation soldiers near his house
11.	'Abbas 'Othman El-'Oweiwi	Dec. 2000	13,	26	Hebron	Shot near his shop by Israeli soldiers stationed at a military site in Hebron
12.	Hani Hussein Abu Bakra	Dec. 2000	14,	32	Rafah	Shot by Israeli occupation soldiers, positioned at a military roadblock near Deir El-Balah
13.	'Abdullah Gannan <sup>13</sup>	Dec. 2000	23,	40	Khan Yunis	The same incident
14.	Thabet Ahmed Thabet	Dec. 2000	31,	49	Tulkarm	Shot in his car by Israeli occupation soldiers firing from a truck and a jeep
15.	Mas'oud Hussein 'Ayyad	Feb. 2001	13,	57	Al-Zaytoun, Gaza	Israeli combat helicopters fired three rockets at his car
16.	Mahmoud Suleiman El-Madani	Feb. 2001	19,	25	Balata, Nablus	Shot by undercover agents near Balata refugee camp
17.	Mohammed 'Attwa 'Abdel-'Aal	Apr., 2001	2,	26	Rafah	Two Israeli combat helicopters fired three rockets at his car
18.	Eyad Mohammed Hardan	Apr. 2001	1 5,	24	'Arrabeh, Jenin	A remote-control bomb detonated at a public phone

<sup>13</sup>Gannan was wounded in the incident of the assassination of Hani Abu Bakra, and died from his wound on December 23, 2000.

19.	Ramadan 'Azzam	Ismail	Apr. 25, 2001	33	Rafah	A suspicious object exploded near the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt, killing him and three other young men. An Israeli helicopter was seen flying over the area at the time.
20.	Samir Sabri	Zo'rob	Apr. 25, 2001	34	Rafah	The same incident
21.	S'adi Mohamemd	El-Dabbas	Apr. 25, 2001	32	Rafah	The same incident
22.	Yasser Hamdan	El-Dabbas	Apr. 25, 2001	18	Rafah	The same incident