

Assassination of Palestinians ...

An Israeli Official Policy

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

01st May, - 28th September,2003

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

The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network

E-mail: pchr@pchgaza.org

web-Page: www.pchgaza.org

Introduction

During the current Palestinian Intifada, Israeli occupying forces have adopted a policy of extra-judicial assassinations against Palestinians allegedly involved in resistance activities against Israeli targets. International complicity concerning this issue has only served to encourage Israeli authorities to escalate their policy of extra-judicial assassinations; and in so doing, commit further grave breaches of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 1949 (Fourth Geneva Convention), against Palestinian civilians.

Since the beginning of the current Intifada, PCHR has made efforts to accurately document assassination attempts carried out by Israeli occupying forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs), highlight these actions, draw attention to their dangerous effects and urge the international community to intervene and pressure Israeli occupying forces to stop such actions. For the purpose of documentation, PCHR depends on an updated accurate database that detail all assassination attempts carried out by Israeli occupying forces during the current Intifada.

Israeli occupying forces have carried out assassination attempts against activists of various Palestinian organizations, whom they accuse of carrying out or planning attacks against Israeli forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and/ or inside Israel. Israeli forces have begun to target the political leaders of Palestinian organizations. All assassination attempts against Palestinians have been carried out in a summary fashion; with neither evidence being offered to link the targeted individual to attacks committed by Palestinian resistance fighters, nor efforts made to provide judicial review of the means and methods employed and the process by which individuals are chosen to be targeted for assassination.

As part of its activities, PCHR has published a series of reports that document assassinations committed by Israeli occupying forces against Palestinians during the al-Aqsa Intifada. The reports highlight the methods employed by Israeli occupying forces in carrying out assassination attempts, and provide statistics on the amount and type of Palestinians killed or wounded in such attempts. They are also annexed with tables of assassination attempts. PCHR has published 5 reports on assassinations committed by Israeli occupying forces between 29 September 2000 and 30 April 2003.¹

This is the sixth in a series of reports published by PCHR on assassinations committed by Israeli occupying forces during the al-Aqsa Intifada. This report

¹ See www.pchrgaza.org.

documents assassinations in the period 1 May – 28 September 2003. The period under study witnesses an unprecedented escalation in the assassination attempts carried out by Israeli occupying forces in the OPTs. Israeli occupying forces targeted most leaders of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in the Gaza Strip. Most targeted leaders survived these attempts, but Isma'il Abu Shanab, a senior leader of Hamas, was killed in one of these attempts. The Israeli government officially declared that it would target political and military leaders of Hamas and that none of them would enjoy impunity. In this context, the Israeli media reported that the Israeli government made playing cards, which have photos of 34 Palestinian figures who would be targeted by Israeli occupying forces, in a fashion similar to playing cards made by the US occupying forces in Iraq, which have photos of 55 wanted former Iraqi leaders. The playing cards made by the Israeli government include photos of some leaders of Hamas in the OPTs and abroad, including: Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the founder of the movement; Dr. 'Abdul 'Aziz al-Rantisi; Dr. Mahmoud al-Zahhar; Isma'il Abu Shanab, whose photo has a sign that refers to his death; Khaled Masha'al, head of the political bureau of Hamas; and Mohammed Daif and 'Adnan al-Ghoul, who are senior leaders of 'Ezziddin al-Qassam Brigade, the military wing of Hamas, in the Gaza Strip. The playing cards include also a photo of Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, Secretary General of Hizbullah in Lebanon, the only non-Palestinian figure included in the playing cards.

Facts and Figures

During the period under study, Israeli occupying forces carried out 29 assassination attempts that targeted 57 Palestinians² from various Palestinian organizations, allegedly wanted by Israeli forces for their resistance activities. In these attempts, 66 Palestinians were killed; 35 targeted Palestinians and 31 bystanders, including 5 children, 6 women and 7 elderly people. An old man also died from an injury he sustained in an assassination attempt carried out by Israeli occupying forces in Tulkarm in 2001.³ In addition, 268 Palestinians were wounded in these assassination attempts. Of those wounded, 7 were targeted individuals, while the others, including 65 children and a number of women and elderly people, were non-targeted bystanders.

A total of 157 assassination operations were carried out by Israeli forces from 28 September 2000 to 28 September 2003. In these operations, 195 targeted Palestinians were killed, 3 of whom were children, and 114 bystanders were killed, including 38 children, 14 women and 16 elderly people. In addition, 34 targeted Palestinians and 593 bystanders were wounded by Israeli forces during these operations.

Most assassination attempts took place in the West Bank, where Israeli occupying forces carried out 104 assassination attempts that left 133 targeted Palestinians and 52 bystanders dead, and 148 Palestinians wounded. In the Gaza Strip, 61 targeted Palestinians and 64 bystanders were killed in 42 assassination attempts carried out by Israeli occupying forces. In addition, 479 Palestinians, including 10 targeted persons, were wounded.

Escalation of Assassinations

According to PCHR's documentation, the number of assassinations carried out by Israeli occupying forces against Palestinians has steadily increased during the current Intifada, and the number of victims has sharply increased. In the first year of the Intifada, 28 September 2000 – 28 September 2001, Israeli occupying forces carried out 41 assassination attempts. In these attempts, 54 Palestinians, including 35 targeted persons and 19 bystanders were killed. Furthermore, 65 Palestinians, including 13 targeted persons and 52 bystanders, were wounded. In the second year of the Intifada, 29 September 2001 – 28 September 2002, Israeli occupying

² During the period under study, 21 Palestinians survived assassination attempts carried out by Israeli occupying forces.

³ On 12 May 2003, Malek Zuhdi Yassin, 63, from Tulkarm, died from an injury he sustained when Israeli occupying forces attempted to assassinate Palestinian activists in Tulkarm on 6 September 2001.

forces carried out 50 assassination attempts. In these attempts, 114 Palestinians, including 70 targeted persons and 44 bystanders were killed. In addition, 188 Palestinians, including 6 targeted persons and 182 bystanders were wounded. In the third year of the Intifada, 29 September 2002 – 28 September 2003, Israeli occupying forces carried out 66 assassination attempts that targeted. In these attempts, 141 Palestinians, including 99 targeted persons and 51 bystanders were killed. In addition, 374 Palestinians, including 15 targeted persons and 359 bystanders were wounded.

Diagram (1)

Assassination Attempts Carried out by Israeli Occupying Forces in the Years of the Intifada

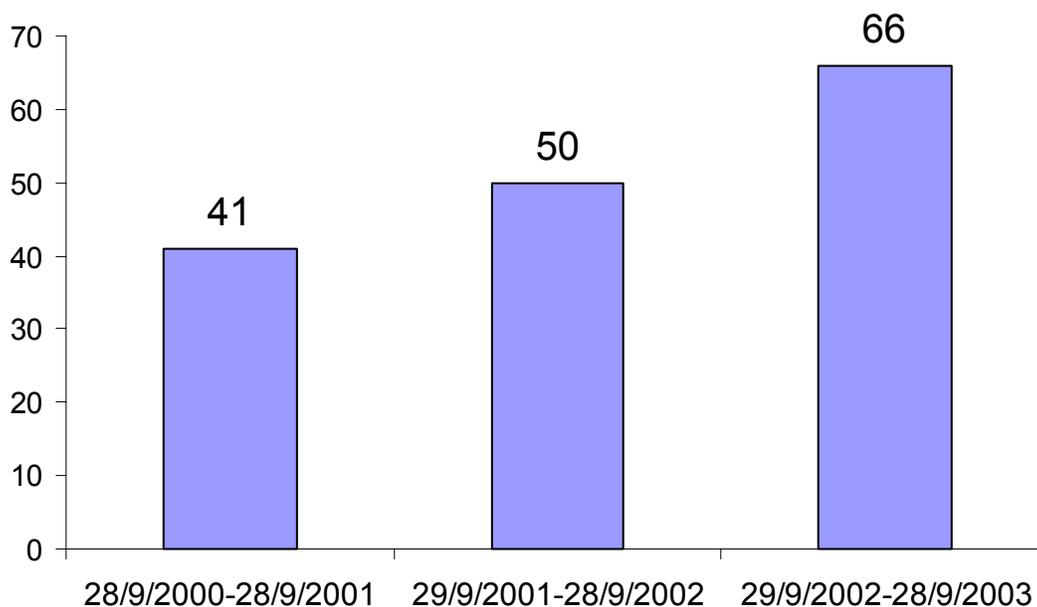


Diagram (2)

Palestinians Killed in Assassination Attempts Carried out by Israeli Occupying Forces in the Years of the Intifada

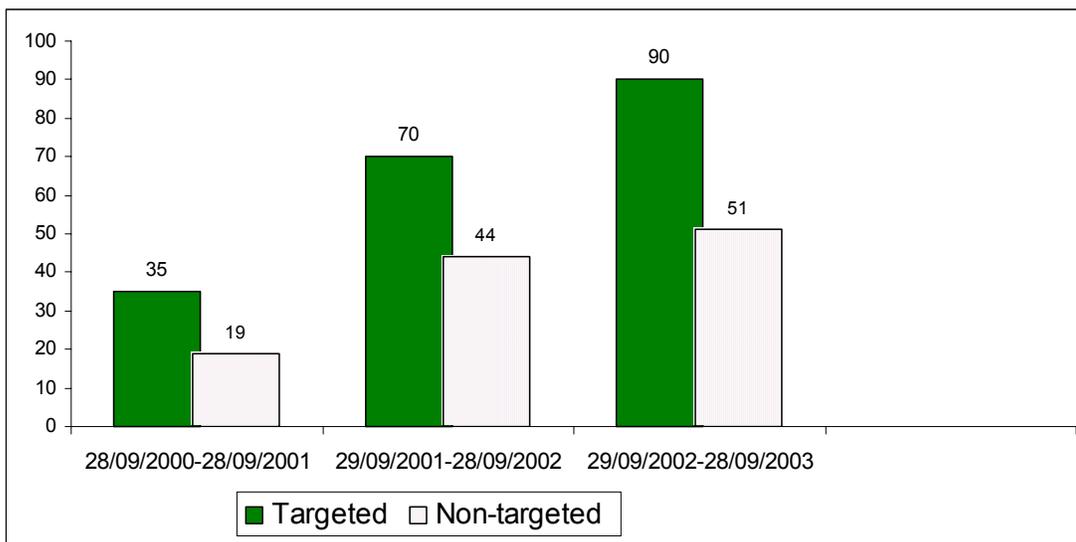
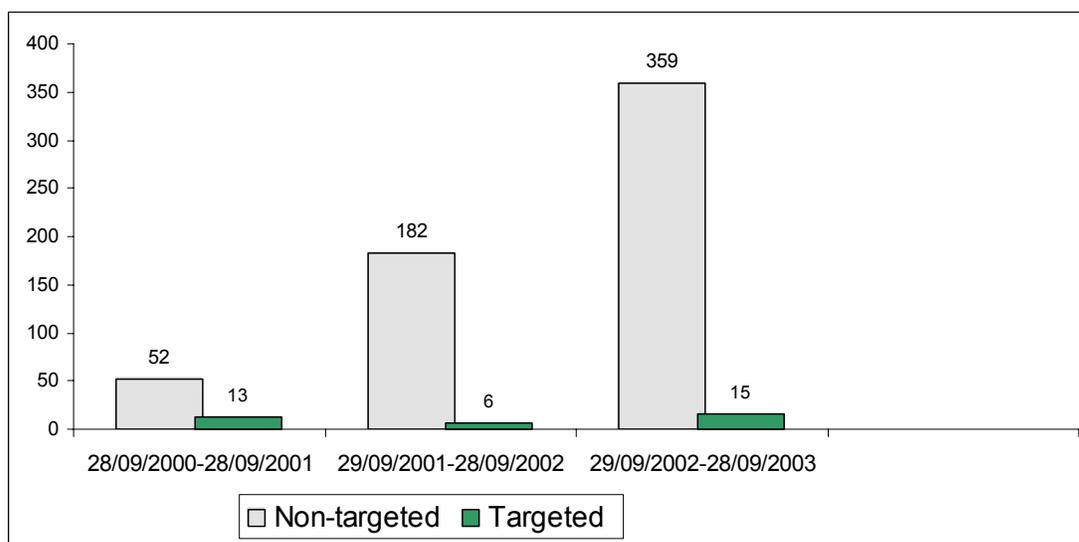


Diagram (3)

Palestinians Wounded in Assassination Attempts Carried out by Israeli Occupying Forces in the Years of the Intifada



The above diagrams show that the period under study witnessed an increase in the frequency of assassination attempts carried out by Israeli occupying forces. While the average monthly number of assassination attempts in the first year of the Intifada was 3.41, it increased to 4.16 in the second year, and to 5.5 in the third year.

There was also an increase in the number of victims per month. While the monthly average number of victims was 4.4 in the first year, it sharply increased to 9.41 in the second year and to 11.5 in the third year.

Disregard for the Lives of Non- Targeted Palestinian Civilians

According to PCHR's documentation, Israeli occupying forces have shown clear disregard for the lives of non-targeted Palestinian civilians while carrying out assassination attempts. The fact that bystanders account for a large percentage of those killed and almost all of those wounded in Israeli assassination attempts demonstrates an increasing disregard for civilian life by Israeli officials.

According to PCHR's documentation, 37% of Palestinians killed during assassination attempts were civilian bystanders, 31% of whom were children. In addition, 95% of the Palestinians who were wounded in these attempts were also civilian bystanders. Such figures refute Israeli claims that assassination attempts are performed in an accurate manner that causes the least harm to civilians.

During the period under study, 30 Palestinian bystanders, including 5 children, were killed in assassination attempts, constituting 47.5% of the total number of victims. In addition, 261 civilian bystanders were wounded, constituting 98% of the total number of the wounded. In one assassination attempt on 12 June 2003, Israeli helicopter gunships attacked the car of a member of the Hamas movement, Tasser Mohammed Taha, 30, from al-Boreij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, while he, his wife and their child were traveling through Gaza City. The three and 5 civilian bystanders were killed and more than 20 others were injured. A missile also hit a nearby house, but the family survived.

Illegal Actions Under International Humanitarian Law

Assassinations constitute extra-judicial executions under international humanitarian law and are thus illegal; they represent a distinct subset of "willful killings" insofar as they are clearly carried out in a premeditated and targeted manner. Moreover, assassinations by Israeli forces lack a judicial process;

automatically excluding the possibility for presentation of evidence or opportunities for the defense and appeal of targeted individuals.

Article 3(1) of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the overriding instrument of international humanitarian law governing Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories, provides:

“The 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...”

Moreover, under Article 27 of the Convention, “protected persons are entitled, in all circumstances, to “respect for their persons” and that “they shall be at all times humanely treated, and shall be protected especially against all acts of violence or threats thereof.”

Article 32 of the Convention prohibits "taking any measure of such a character as to cause the physical suffering or extermination of protected persons.” It further provides that "this prohibition applies not only to murder, torture, corporal punishment, mutilation and medical or scientific experiments not necessitated by the medical treatment of a protected person, but also to any other measures of brutality whether applied by civilian or military agents.”

Willful killings are considered grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention (Article 147), and further defined as war crimes in the First Additional Protocol (Article 185). All High Contracting Parties to the Convention are obliged “to search for persons alleged to have committed, or to have ordered to be committed, such grave breaches, and shall bring such persons, regardless of their nationality, before their own courts” (Article 146).

These killings also violate numerous provisions of international human rights law:

Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that "everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

Article 6(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Israel is a state party, provides that “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.”

Furthermore, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court defines these killings as war crimes. The Statute states that war crimes include:

"(a) Grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, namely, any of the following acts against persons or property protected under the provisions of the relevant Geneva Convention:

(i) Willful killing;...

(b)....

(iv) Intentionally launching an attack in the knowledge that such attack will cause incidental loss of life or injury to civilians or damage to civilian objects....

(vi) Killing or wounding a combatant who, having laid down his arms or having no longer means of defense...

(c)...

(iv) The passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions without previous judgment pronounced by a regularly constituted court, affording all judicial guarantees which are generally recognized as indispensable.

(e) ...

(ix) Killing or wounding treacherously a combatant adversary..." 5

In his opinion mentioned in a petition submitted by the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment (LAW) and the Public Committee against Torture in Israel (PCATI) to the Israeli High Court on 18 June 2003, to stop assassinations committed by Israeli occupying forces, Professor Antonio Cassese states that “the killing of civilians suspected of terrorist activities, if not carried out while they are directly engaged in these activities, is a blatant violation of one of the most fundamental tenets of international law – the obligation of warring sides to distinguish between combatants and civilians.” Professor Cassese is considered a world renowned expert in international humanitarian law.

An Israeli Official Policy

The Israeli government openly claims responsibility for and a determination to continue its policy of “targeted killing” or “intense deterrence” – Israeli terminology for extra- judicial assassinations. Furthermore, Israel is the only state in the world that has legalized the use of assassinations, a policy widely condemned by the international community. Israel claims that assassinations are carried out in self-defense against “terrorist attacks.”

Decisions to carry out extra-judicial assassinations are made by senior Israeli officials, such as the prime minister and defense minister. At the opening of a weekly meeting of the Israeli cabinet on 22 June 2003, the Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon praised the assassination of ‘Abdullah al-Qawasmi, the leader of the military wing of Hamas movement in Hebron. Sharon said that he “would like to thank security services for the success of the important operation in Hebron” and described the operation as “very important and aimed to ensure security for the citizens of Israel.” The Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz ordered Israeli security services to increase military operations, including arrests and assassinations.⁴ The Israeli military Chief of Staff Moshe Ya’lon admitted responsibility for the assassinations committed by his forces. The Israeli media reported that “for the first time, he talked about the campaign of assassinations carried out against activists of Hamas movement in the Gaza Strip (in an indication to a series of assassination attempts that targeted a number of activists of Hamas movement in the period 10-13 June 2003, which killed a number of activists and dozens of civilians and injured hundreds of others). Ya’lon said that “there is a need for madness for some days to prevent further deterioration... assassinations provide the political establishment with a means to make changes and this means proves itself.”⁵

Assassination attempts carried out by Israeli occupying forces against Palestinian activists in the OPTs are approved by the Israeli High Court. On 8 July 2003, the court denied a petition submitted by the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment (LAW) and the Public Committee against Torture in Israel (PCATI) requesting an interim injunction prohibiting assassinations in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. However, the court granted the State 60 days to reply to the arguments presented by the petitioners.⁶

Methods Employed in Assassination Attempts

Since the current Intifada began in September 2000, Israeli occupying forces extra-judicially assassinated dozens of Palestinians, who were allegedly wanted for carrying out, planning or facilitating resistance activities against Israeli targets. In such operations, Israeli occupying forces have employed a number of methods:

⁴ The Arabic web site of the Israeli daily *Yediot Aharanot*, 12 June 2003.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 18 June 2003.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 9 July 2003.

1. Attacking the place where a targeted person is present with helicopter gunships or fighter jets

Israeli occupying forces have employed this method in dozens of assassination attempts. Israeli helicopter gunships launch missiles at a targeted person, who may be in a car, a house or a public building. In some attempts, Israeli occupying forces used F-16 fighter jets to fire rockets into densely populated areas, causing high casualties among Palestinian civilians. Out of 157 assassination attempts carried out by Israeli occupying forces, combat helicopters and fighter jets were used in 57 operations, constituting 38% of the total number of attempts. During the period under study, Israeli occupying forces used combat helicopters and fighter jets in 16 out of 29 assassination attempts, constituting 55% of the number of attempts.

2. Undercover units

Undercover units are elite units of Israeli occupying forces that disguise themselves as Palestinians, and often use civilian cars with Palestinian registration tags to infiltrate Palestinian communities, in order to assassinate or arrest Palestinians. These units were formed during the first Intifada (1987-1993) in which they killed dozens of Palestinians. In the current Intifada, undercover units have intensified their activities and assassinated dozens of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

3. Firing at a targeted person from inside Israeli military locations

There are many Israeli military locations and military checkpoints surrounding Palestinian communities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. During the current Intifada, Israeli occupying forces have reinforced their presence in some Palestinian towns, villages and refugee camps. Israeli soldiers fire at Palestinian activists from military installations and checkpoints in these areas. At times, Israeli forces fire artillery shells at activists from these locations.

4. Surrounding and attacking the house of a targeted person

Israeli occupying forces infiltrate a Palestinian community, break into the house of a targeted person and shoot the targeted individual. During and after the Israeli full-scale offensive on the West Bank in the spring of 2002 ("Operation Defensive Shield"), Israeli forces carried out a number of assassinations using this method. In many instances, Israeli occupying forces destroyed houses while the residents were still inside.

5. Using Palestinian civilians as human shields

Israeli occupying forces have used Palestinian civilians as human shields during attempts to assassinate Palestinian activists, unlawfully endangering the lives of these civilians. Palestinian civilians used as human shields are forced to stay in front of Israeli forces as they move towards the place where a targeted person is hiding. One Palestinian civilian was killed and others were wounded when they were forced to act as human shields during assassination attempts.

**Assassinations Committed by Israeli Occupying Forces
1 May – 28 September 2003**

Case (1)

Date: 8 May 2003

Targeted person: Eyad 'Eissa al-Baik, 27, from Jabalya refugee camp.

At approximately 12:15 on Thursday, 8 May 2003, two Israeli Apache gunships were seen flying over Gaza City. A few minutes later, the helicopters launched 4 missiles at a civilian car (a white Peugeot 205) traveling along Bour Sa'id Street, off al-Wehda Street, towards the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood in the north of Gaza City. Two missiles hit the car, destroying it and killing the driver. The other two missiles landed in the street, but no casualties were reported. The driver was later identified as Eyad 'Eissa al-Baik, 27, from Jabalya refugee camp.

Case (2)

Date: 15 May 2003

Targeted person: Darwish al-Dahdar, 40, from Bitounia village

At approximately 13:30 on Thursday, 15 May 2003, a civilian car with a Palestinian license plate was seen chasing another civilian car, a white Mazda, which was traveling from al-Ersal Street to 'Ein Mesbah area, north of Ramallah. Bullets were fired from the first car at the second car, which turned over, but the passengers were able to escape. During the chase, an UNRWA vehicle passed by the area. The vehicle was hit by several live bullets. Three members of UNRWA staff were slightly injured.

Later, the Israeli daily Yediot Aharanot quoted Israeli military sources on its Arabic web page as saying that an Israeli military undercover unit carried out a failed assassination attempt on Darwish al-Dahdar, 40, from Bitounia village, southwest of Ramallah.

Case (3)

Date: 29 May 2003

Targeted person: Mohammed Jihad al-Qedra, 25, Khan Yunis

At approximately 02:00 on Thursday, 29 May 2003, approximately 20 Israeli soldiers moved into Abu Haddaf area in al-Qarara village, northeast of Khan Yunis. They raided the house of Jihad Salim al-Qedra and forced the 8 residents out. The entire family left the house except for the owner's son, Mohammed, 25, who was sleeping on the roof. The family overheard an Israeli soldier saying: "Everyone in the house must get out." Mohammed, who was unarmed, then tried to exit the house, but as he attempted to leave, the family heard the Israeli soldiers fire 6 live bullets directed at him from a distance of only 2m. His family rushed into the house but the Israeli soldiers prevented them from helping Mohammed. The soldiers remained in the house for about half an hour, while the son lay injured. When Israeli soldiers withdrew from the house, they detained the owner's other son, Ahmed, 21. As soon as the soldiers left, neighbors attempted to evacuate Mohammed to a hospital in Khan Yunis, but were stopped by Israeli soldiers, who ordered them to Mohammed out of the car. Israeli soldiers handcuffed and blindfolded the neighbors, and a soldier then fired one bullet at Mohammed at point blank range. A second bullet was fired into the air. Mohammed remained on the ground until Israeli soldiers withdrew from the area. A Palestinian ambulance evacuated the body to Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis. According to medical sources, the victim was hit by 3 live bullets in the chest, abdomen and thigh.

Case (4)

Date: 10 June 2003

The main targeted person: Dr. 'Abdul 'Aziz al-Rantisi, 60, Gaza

Another targeted Person: Mustapha Abdul Rahim Saleh, 30, from Gaza

At approximately 10:53 on Tuesday, 10 June 2003, 2 Israeli combat helicopters launched 6 missiles at a civilian car – a blue Mitsubishi – that was traveling in 'Ezziddin al-Qassam Street in a densely populated area in Gaza City. Dr. 'Abdul 'Aziz al-Rantisi, 60, a prominent leader of the Hamas movement, his son, Ahmed, 20, and two of his bodyguards were traveling in the car.

The first missile hit the front of the car. Although the passengers were wounded by the first strike, they managed to jump from the vehicle. Shortly after, the helicopters launched more missiles, completely destroying the car. The second strike killed a woman, who was passing by the area. The woman has been identified as Khadra Yousef Abu Hamada, 30 from Al Karama housing project, north of Gaza City. Dr. al-Rantisi survived the attack, but was wounded in his left leg. More than 30 civilians, including 8 children, were also wounded. Shortly after the attack the wounded were evacuated to Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. According to medical sources, 7 of the wounded were in a serious condition, including one of al-Rantisi's bodyguards, Mustapha Abdul Rahim Saleh, 30, from Gaza City. An hour after the attack, Saleh succumbed to his wound. Also among the wounded was PCHR staff member, Bassam Abu Hashish, 40, from Gaza City, who was wounded by shrapnel throughout his body, as he passed by the area.

On 11 June 2003, Israeli media sources pointed out that “Israeli security services accuse al-Rantissi of links to 227 Israeli deaths and 1393 injuries in attacks carried out by Hamas movement since the beginning of the Intifada in September 2000.” The same sources further claimed that al-Rantissi is “responsible for launching al-Qassam rockets, infiltrations into Israeli settlements, and detonating explosives against Israeli vehicles.” According to the same sources, al-Rantissi is “accused of recruiting Israeli Arabs to Hamas movement.”

Israeli occupying forces admitted responsibility for the failed assassination attempt against al-Rantissi. On 10 June 2003, Israeli media reports quoted Israeli political sources as saying: “If the Palestinian Authority does not combat terrorism, Israel will do it. Al-Rantissi postponed a ceasefire. He exploits the media to send communiqués to field activists of Hamas movement.” The same sources further claimed that “activists of Hamas recently arrested confessed during interrogation

that al-Rantissi has direct links to giving instructions to carry out attacks against Israel.”

Israeli media reports also quoted Israeli security sources commenting on a bombing that occurred in Jerusalem following that failed assassination attempt that targeted al-Rantissi as saying: “The bombing is a part of the consistent policies of Hamas. Israel attempted to get rid of one of the movement’s leaders at the planning level (an indication to the failed assassination attempt that targeted al-Rantissi). We hope to succeed in the future. The bombing occurred shortly after the failed assassination attempt, while planning for such attacks usually needs a very long time.”

Case (5)

Date: 10 June 2003

Targeted persons: 2 activists of Hamas movement

At approximately 18:30 on 10 June 2003, 2 Israeli combat helicopters flew over the northern Gaza Strip town of Jabalya, apparently observing 2 Palestinian resistance men who were traveling in a civilian car in Zimmu Street. The two felt danger, so they jumped out of the car and escaped. Immediately, one of the helicopters launched a missile at the car, destroying it. A few minutes later, the helicopters launched 2 missiles, wounding the two men and 20 passing Palestinian civilians, including 8 children. Three of the wounded, including a woman, died:

1. Mohammed Fayeze Ahmed Saleh 'Abed Rabbu, 25, hit by shrapnel in the head;
2. Hammouda Faraj 'Abed Rabbu 'Abed Rabbu, 19, hit by shrapnel in the chest and the abdomen; and
3. Miriam Rajab Ibrahim 'Abed Rabbu, 35, hit by shrapnel throughout the body.

Case (6)

Date: 11 June 2003

Targeted persons:

- 1) Suhail No'man Abu Nahel, 30, from al-Shati refugee camp**
- 2) Titu Mahmoud Mas'oud, 36, from Jabalya refugee camp**

At approximately 18:00 on Wednesday, 11 June 2003, 2 Israeli combat helicopters launched 4 missiles at a civilian car that was traveling in Salah al-Din Street in the densely populated al-Shojaeya neighborhood in the east of Gaza city. The missile hit the car and destroyed. Two Palestinians who were traveling in the car were killed:

1. Suhail No'man Abu Nahel, 30, from al-Shati refugee camp in Gaza; and
2. Titu Mahmoud Mas'oud, 36, from Jabalya refugee camp.

The two were members of Ezziddin al-Qassam Brigade, the military wing of Hamas movement.

Shrapnel from the missile also killed 6 passing Palestinian civilians, including 2 brothers and 2 sisters:

1. Yasser Hassan Khalil Humaid, 35;
2. Khalil Hassan Khalil Humaid, 33;
3. 'Azzam Husni al-Je'el, 40;
4. Majeda Mahmoud Mohammed Dalloul, 20;
5. Samia Mahmoud Mohammed Dalloul, 55; and
6. Rateb Mahfouz al-Je'el, 55.

In addition, 35 civilians, including 14 children, were wounded. A number of houses and civilian facilities were also damaged.

Case (7)

Date: 11 June 2003

Targeted persons:

- 1) Mohammed 'Aadel Doghmosh, 23**
- 2) Rawi Abu Kumail, 23, both from al-Sabra in Gaza City**

At approximately midnight, 2 Israeli combat helicopters launched 3 missiles at a civilian car, white Mitsubishi, which parked near 'Ali Ben Abi Taleb mosque in al-Zytoun neighborhood in the southeast of Gaza city. Two Palestinians who were near the car were killed:

1. Mohammed 'Aadel Doghmosh, 23; and
2. Rawi Abu Kumail, 23, both from al-Sabra neighborhood in Gaza city.

The two were members of 'Ezziddin al-Qassam Brigade, the military wing of Hamas movement. They had got out of the car to have dinner in the area.

Israeli media sources quoted Israeli security sources as saying that “2 Palestinian activists who are members of ‘Ezziddin al-Qassam Birigade, the military wing of Hamas movement, were killed at night when Israeli helicopters launched a number of missiles at their cars.” The same security sources further added that “2 helicopters of the Israeli Air Force launched a number of missiles at a Palestinian cell that erected mortar launchers in an open area in al-Zaytoun neighborhood in Gaza City. Members of the cell were ready to launch mortar shells at Netzarim settlement in the Gaza Strip.”

Case (8)

Date: 12 June 2003

Targeted person: Yasser Mohammed 'Ali Taha, 31, from al-Boreij refugee camp

At approximately 15:50 on Thursday, 12 June 2003, an Israeli helicopter gunship launched 5 missiles at a civilian car that was traveling along al-Jalaa' Street in central Gaza City. 4 missiles hit the car, killing all occupants. The occupants were later identified as Yasser Mohammed 'Ali Taha, 31, from al-Boreij refugee camp, and his 7-month pregnant wife, Islam 'Abdullah Taha, 25, and their baby, Khawla, 18 months.

5 non-targeted Palestinians were also killed in the attack, including one who later died from his wounds, and more than 20 were injured. The wounded were transferred to Shifa hospital in Gaza City, several of whom remain in a serious condition, according to medical sources. Several children were among the wounded. The 5 bystanders killed were identified as:

1. Jihad Jasser al-Saudi, 36, from al-Shaghaf area in Gaza;
2. Ahmed Mohammed Samour, 30, from al-Shati refugee camp in Gaza;
3. Sa'ed Ziad Ghabayen, 30;
4. Mohammed Khalil Matar, 34, from al-Shati refugee camp in Gaza; and
5. Salim Sa'id Salha, 41, from al-Zaytoun neighborhood in Gaza, who succumbed to his wound on Friday, 13 June 2003.

The fifth missile launched by the Israeli helicopter gunship missed the targeted car and hit the family home of 'Abdul Fatah 'Abdullah Nijem, located only a few meters from where the car was hit. No injuries were reported.

Taha had been wanted by the Israeli authorities for many years due to his alleged involvement in the military wing of the Hamas movement. In March 2003, Israeli occupying forces raided Taha's family home during an incursion into the al-Boreij camp, in the central Gaza Strip. His 65-year-old father and three of his brothers were arrested during the raid, but Taha managed to escape. The family home was destroyed during the incursion. Taha's father and brothers remain in Israeli detention.

Israeli media reports quoted Israeli security sources as claiming that "Yasser Taha, 30, was known for Israeli security services as a central activist of Hamas

movement in Gaza and as an aide for Mohammed D'aif (a Hamas leader).” The same sources further claimed that “he was a member of a group working in al-Shojaeya neighborhood”, and that “he used to sell weapons, planted explosives and fired (at Israeli targets).”

Case (9)

Date: 12 June 2003

Targeted person: Fadi Tayseer Jardat, 23, from Seilat al-Harthiya village near Jenin

At approximately 21:50 on Thursday, 12 June 2003, an Israeli occupying forces undercover unit traveling in a Palestinian registered civilian vehicle (Mercedes 410), entered the al-Dabbous quarter in the east of the northern West Bank town of Jenin. The car stopped in front of the house of Fadi Tayseer Jardat, 23, from Seilat al-Harthiya village and resident of Jenin. Jaradat was having coffee at the door of the house together with Saleh Suleiman Ibrahim Jardat, 33, also from Seilat al-Harthiya village. Immediately, members of the undercover unit, who were wearing military uniform, got out of the car and opened fire at the men. Both were hit by several live bullets. Approximately 5 minutes later, 2 Israeli military jeeps arrived and Israeli soldiers moved the men into one of the jeeps and then left the area. According to medical sources, there were signs of bruising on the faces and necks, and injuries on the bodies as a result of being pulled along the ground. Saleh Jardat was hit by 5 live bullets in the head, neck, chest and abdomen, while Fadi Jardat was hit by 3 live bullets in the neck, chest and right hand.

Case (10)

Date: 13 June 2003

Targeted person: unknown

At approximately 19:50 on Friday, 13 June 2003, 2 Israeli helicopter gunships, accompanied by an F-16 fighter jet, launched 3 missiles at a civilian car (grey Mazda) that was traveling near 'Abu 'Eida crossroads in the densely populated al-Sabra neighborhood in Gaza City. Fu'ad Yousef 'Abdullah al-Liddawi, 26, from Jabalya refugee camp, a member of Hamas was driving the car, and one of his colleagues was traveling with him. Al Liddawi's colleague was able to jump from the car as the first missile hit. The other 2 missiles also hit the car, killing Al-Liddawi. In addition, 28 passing Palestinian civilians were wounded, including 11 children.

The Israeli media reported that “the Israeli military asserted that Apache helicopter gunships launched a number of missile at a car, in which Palestinian activists of Hamas movement, were traveling on their way to launch Qassam rocket the Israeli town of Sedorot.”

Case (11)

Date: 21 June 2003

Targeted person: 'Abdullah 'Abdul Qader al-Qawasmi, 43, from Hebron

On Saturday evening, 20 June 2003, an undercover unit of Israeli occupying forces assassinated 'Abdullah 'Abdul Qader al-Qawasmi, 43, from Hebron. Qawasmi was accused by Israel of being the leader of the military wing of Hamas movement in the West Bank.

According to information available to PCHR, at approximately 22:30 on Saturday, 20 June 2003, al-Qawasmi left al-Ansar mosque in al-Salam Street in the West of Hebron after the evening prayer. He was reportedly unarmed. When he was approximately 70m away from the mosque, members of an Israeli undercover unit got out of 3 Palestinian-plated cars. Without prior warning, they opened fire at al-Qawasmi from a close distance, killing him. According to eyewitnesses, Israeli soldiers fired at the victim continuously for more than 5 minutes. Then the forces surrounded him and fired at his body from close range. Israeli forces surrounded the mosque and opened fire preventing worshippers from leaving. They closed the area and imposed a curfew, denying access for Palestinian ambulances. After approximately an hour and a half, they transferred al-Qawasmi's body to an unknown destination.

The Israeli daily *Yediot Aharanot* quoted Israeli military sources on its Arabic website as saying that "an Israeli undercover unit arrived to the place in Hebron where al-Qawasmi was present to arrest him. He fired at soldiers, so they returned fire and killed him." At the beginning of the weekly meeting of the Israeli cabinet on Sunday, 22 June 2003, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon praised the assassination, saying: "I would like to thank security services for the success of the important operation of yesterday in Hebron." Sharon described the operation as "very important to achieve security for the citizens of Israel." He added that "if Palestinians do not assume security responsibility in proposed areas, Israel will continue its operations to achieve security for its citizens."

Case (12)

Date: 25 June 2003

Targeted person: Mohammed Na'im Siam, 28, from Khan Yunis

At approximately 18:00 on Wednesday, 25 June 2003, an Israeli helicopter gunship launched 3 missiles at a civilian car, a Peugeot, which was traveling on a residential road linking the 'Abasan and Khuza'a villages, east of Khan Yunis. The first 2 missiles missed the target and exploded ahead of the car. While the driver was trying to move back, a third missile hit the front of the car. Palestinian civilians hurried towards the car, and took out the driver, Mohammed Na'im Siam, 28. Siam is wanted by Israeli occupying forces for being a field leader of the military wing of the Hamas movement. He sustained multiple shrapnel wounds throughout the body.

Shrapnel from the missiles hit a passing taxi, a yellow Mercedes, in which 5 Palestinian civilians were traveling. The driver and a girl who was sitting in the back seat were killed:

1. Akram 'Ali Farhan, 29; and
2. Nivin Ahmed 'Abdul Malek Abu Rujaila, 19.

In addition, 12 civilians passing by were wounded; two were in a serious condition.

Israeli media reports quoted Israeli military sources as saying that “2 helicopters launched missiles at a number of activists of ‘Ezziddin al-Qassam, the military wing of Hamas movement, who were on their way to launch rockets at Israeli towns... the heavy explosion resulted from attacking one of the cars proves that intelligence information that the car was loaded with mortars was right.”

Case (13)

Date: 14 August 2003

Targeted person: Mohammed Ayoub Seder, 28, from Hebron

On Thursday, 14 August 2003, Israeli occupying forces assassinated Mohammed Ayoub Seder, 28, from Hebron, claiming that he was one of the most wanted people in Hebron.

At approximately 01:15 on the aforementioned day, Israeli occupying forces, reinforced with heavy military vehicles, moved into the Palestinian controlled area of Sha'aba, northeast of Hebron. They surrounded three commercial stores belonging to the heirs of the deceased Mohammed Jawad 'Omar al-Muhtasseb, approximately 300m east of the headquarters of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH). Israeli soldiers ordered residents of nearby buildings through megaphones to get out. Then, they opened fire at the stores. They then ordered a person in the targeted buildings to surrender. At approximately 03:00, Israeli soldiers fired two artillery shells at the stores. As a result, fire broke out in the stores. An Israeli bulldozer approached the stores and began to tear one of them down. At approximately 06:00, Israeli forces declared that they found Seder's body. Before withdrawing from the area, a military vehicle transported Seder's body to an unknown destination. The body has been kept by Israeli occupying forces.

An Israeli military spokesman claimed that an exchange of fire took place between Seder and Israeli occupying forces, but eyewitnesses denied this claim and confirmed that Israeli forces ordered a man to surrender without mentioning his name specifically. It is worth noting that on 10 December 2001, Seder survived a failed assassination attempt, when an Israeli helicopter fired two missiles at a car, in which he was traveling, when it stopped at a traffic light on al-Salam Street in the center of Hebron. Although Seder survived the attack, two Palestinian children: Burhan Mohammed al-Haimouni, 3; and Shadi Ahmed 'Arafa, 13, were killed, and a third civilian, Mohammed Ibrahim al-Haimouni, 46, died later of the wounds he sustained in the attack.

Case (14)

Date: 21 August 2003

The main targeted person: Isma'il Hassan Abu Shanab, 53, from Gaza City

Other targeted persons:

- 1) Mo'men Mohammed Baroud, 24, from al-Shati refugee camp**
- 2) Hani Majed Abu al-'Amrain, 23, from Gaza City**

At approximately 13:15, Israeli helicopter gunships launched 5 missiles at a civilian car that was traveling on UNRWA Vocational Training Center Street opposite to the headquarters of the Gaza Governorate, a densely populated area in Gaza City. The missile destroyed the car. Ambulances and rescue teams arrived on the scene shortly after the attack. They extracted 3 bodies from the car and transferred them to Shifa' Hospital in Gaza City. In addition, 19 passing Palestinian civilians were wounded.

Later, there were reports that Isma'il Hassan Abu Shanab, 53, from Sheikh Radwan neighborhood in Gaza City, a prominent leader of the Hamas movement and 2 of his bodyguards had been traveling in the targeted car. The 2 bodyguards have been identified as Mo'men Mohammed Baroud, 24, from al-Shati refugee camp and Hani Majed Abu al-'Amrain, 23, from Sheikh Radwan neighborhood.

Israeli media reports quoted Israeli political sources as saying: "The suicide bombing in Jerusalem has changed the rules of the game; we have arrived at a crossroads, where there is no place for a truce. If the Palestinians want to stay with Hamas and the Islamic Jihad they will remain stateless." The Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom stated: We have not noticed that the Palestinians have done even 1% of efforts to dismantle terrorist organizations... I said in the past that the truce was a ticking bomb and regrettably, I was right. It is impossible not to act back against a massacre committed against Israelis."

Case (15)

Date: 22 August 2003

Targeted persons:

- 1) Khaled Amin Mohammed al-Namrouti, 35, from 'Ein Beit al-Maa' refugee camp, Nablus**
- 2) Fahed Mahmoud Fahed Bani 'Ouda, 24, from Tammoun village, Jenin**
- 3) 'Othman Younis Abu Romoush, 26, from Jenin**

At approximately 17:10, Israeli occupying forces, which had moved into Nablus on the preceding day, surrounded Rafidya Hospital in the southwest of Nablus. In the meantime, a number of Israeli soldiers, who had mounted the roof of a building under-construction approximately 70m away from the northern entrance of the hospital, opened fire at 3 Palestinians who were apparently hiding from Israeli occupying forces on the roof of the hospital. One of the three, Khaled Amin Mohammed al-Namrouti, 35, from 'Ein Beit al-Maa' refugee camp, was killed by several live bullets in the chest and the abdomen. The other two were seriously injured:

1. Fahed Mahmoud Fahed Bani 'Ouda, 24, from Tammoun village, wounded by several live bullets in the chest, the right arm; and
2. 'Othman Younis Abu Romoush, 26, wounded by several live bullets in the abdomen, the spleen, the pancreas and the kidney.

Israeli occupying forces claimed that Abu Romoush was responsible for an attack that took place inside Israel two weeks ago. Al-Namrouti and Bani 'Ouda are leaders of al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, the military wing of the Fatah movement in the area.

At approximately 03:20 on Tuesday, 26 August 2003, Israeli occupying forces raided Rafidya Hospital. A number of Israeli soldiers went to the intensive care unit, where Abu Romoush and Bani 'Ouda were receiving medical treatment. Israeli soldiers forced the nurses out, except for one, Wafaa' Abu Lawi, whom they insulted. Upon their withdrawal from the hospital, Israeli soldiers kidnapped Abu Romoush and Bani 'Ouda.

Case (16)

Date: 24 August 2003

Targeted persons:

- 1) Ahmed Rushdi Mustafa Eshtaiwi, 24, from Gaza City**
- 2) Waheed Hamed Subhi al-Hams, 21, from Rafah**
- 3) Ahmed Mohammed Ahmed Abu Hilal, 23, from Rafah**
- 4) Mohammed Kana'an 'Abdul Hai Abu Lebda, 20, from Rafah**

At approximately 21:40 on Sunday, 24 August 2003, 2 Israeli combat helicopters flew over Gaza City. The target was a blue civilian car, in which 4 Palestinians were traveling along the coastal road near the Palestinian Presidential Guard (Force 17) junction in the densely populated Sheikh 'Ejlin neighborhood in the southwest of Gaza City. When the individuals in the car became aware of the approaching helicopters, they got out of the car. The helicopters launched 4 missiles in the direction of the fleeing passengers. The 4 Palestinians were instantly killed by the missile strike and 2 passing civilians were wounded. Later, the victims were identified as:

1. Ahmed Rushdi Mustafa Eshtaiwi, 24, from al-Zaytoun neighborhood in Gaza City;
2. Waheed Hamed Subhi al-Hams, 21, from Rafah;
3. Ahmed Mohammed Ahmed Abu Hilal, 23, from Rafah; and
4. Mohammed Kana'an 'Abdul Hai Abu Lebda, 20, from Rafah.

Case (17)

Date: 26 August 2003

Targeted person: Khaled Mas'oud, 26, from Jabalya refugee camp

At approximately 18:50 on Tuesday, 26 August 2003, 2 Israeli combat helicopters launched 3 missiles at a civilian car, a white Renault 5, which was traveling on the Sea Street, west of the northern Gaza Strip town of Jabalya, in a densely populated area. The first missile fell in front of the car. Immediately, 3 persons who were traveling in the car jumped out and escaped. The other two missiles hit the car directly, burning it. A passing Palestinian civilian, Younis Hassan al-Hamalawi, 74, from Jabalya, was killed by shrapnel throughout the body. According to eyewitnesses, al-Hamalawi was riding an animal cart when he was hit by shrapnel. In addition, 28 Palestinian civilians, including 9 children, were wounded. One of the wounded, Mohammed Ibrahim Ba'lousha, 17, from Jabalya, who was wounded by shrapnel in the head, died from his wound on Wednesday, 27 August 2003. On 2 September, Sanaa' Jamil al-Da'our, 9, from Jabalya, died from a wound she sustained in the attack.

The Israeli media reported according to Israeli military sources that “the missiles targeted a Renault 5 car, in which an activist of Hamas movement, Khaled Mas'oud, was traveling, but it is nor clear whether he was killed.”

Case (18)

Date: 28 August 2003

Targeted person: Hamdi Hassan Kalakh, 35, from Khan Yunis

At approximately 21:30 on Thursday, 28 August 2003, Israeli fighter jets were seen flying over Khan Younis. Approximately 20 minutes later, an Israeli helicopter launched a missile at a branch road linking Zo'rob neighborhood with al-Nimsawi neighborhood. The missile hit a man driving an animal cart, killing him instantly. 3 Palestinian civilians were wounded – a man, his child and his brother who were sitting in the vicinity of their house, located on the street. Palestinian ambulances and civil defense personnel arrived to the area and evacuated the dead and wounded to Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis. The man killed was later identified as Hamdi Hassan 'Abdul Rahman Kalakh, 35, from al-Amal neighborhood, an activist of Hamas movement.

Case (19)

Date: 30 August 2003

Targeted persons:

- 1) Farid Yousef Mait, 40, from al-Boreij refugee camp**
- 2) Mahmoud ('Abdullah) Ibrahim 'Aqel, 36, from al-Boreij refugee camp**

At approximately 15:50 on Saturday, 30 August 2003, 2 Israeli combat helicopters launched 3 missiles at a civilian car (Peugeot Thunder) that was traveling along Salah al-Din Street, approximately 230 metres south of the entrance of the Nusseirat refugee camp. 1 missile hit the front of the car, killing its driver, Farid Yousef Mustafa Mait, 40, from al-Boreij refugee camp. A second person who was traveling in the car managed to climb out through a window but was hit by another missile fired from the helicopter and was killed instantly. He was identified as Mahmoud 'Ali Ibrahim 'Aqel, 36, also known as "Abdullah," from al-Boreij refugee camp. In addition, 4 passing Palestinian civilians were wounded. Israeli sources stated that the two men killed were wanted by Israeli occupying forces.

Case (20)

Date: 1 September 2003

Targeted person: Khader Badawi al-Hosari, 35, from Gaza City, and 3 other unknown persons

At approximately 15:15 on Monday, 1 September 2003, 4 missiles were launched at a Palestinian car traveling along a branch road just off al-Wahda Street; a main thoroughfare in central Gaza City that passes through a crowded civilian commercial and residential area. The first missile hit the roof of a three-storey apartment building, approximately 70 meters from the targeted vehicle. No casualties were reported. 3 further missiles hit the targeted vehicle (white Mitsubishi) totally destroying it and killing one of the passengers. 3 additional passengers managed to escape the burning vehicle. Emergency personnel arrived to the area and evacuated the dead and wounded to Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. The dead man was identified as Khader Badawi al-Hosari, 35, from Shejaiya neighborhood in Gaza City. Israeli military sources claimed that the 4 passengers in the targeted vehicle were all activists of the Hamas movement. At least 20 Palestinian civilians, including 7 children, were also injured in the attack and were evacuated for treatment to Shifa Hospital. According to medical sources, at least 3 of the wounded are in a critical condition, one of whom, Riad Lutfi Subaih, 28, from Gaza, died from his injuries.

Case (21)

Date: 2 September 2003

Targeted persons:

- 1) 'Abdul Qader Da'mi, 21, from Tulkarm**
- 2) Wa'el Fu'ad Da'mi, 23, from Tulkarm**

At approximately 13:15 on Tuesday, 2 September 2003, an Israeli military jeep traveling between the entrances of the villages of 'Anza and al-Zawia intercepted a civilian car (Volkswagen Polo) traveling from Tulkram to Jenin on the Nablus-Jenin road. Israeli soldiers ordered the 2 young Palestinian men who were traveling in the car to get out of the vehicle. When the 2 young men got out of the car, 4 Israeli soldiers fired at them, wounding both the men. The soldiers immediately closed the area and withdrew 2 hours later, leaving the body of one of the young men, while arresting the other man who was wounded. The body was transferred to a hospital in Jenin and later identified as 'Abdul Qader Mohammed Da'mi, 21, from Tulkarm and a member of the Islamic Jihad. According to Palestinian medical sources, the victim was hit by 8-10 live bullets in the head, the chest, the abdomen and the legs fired at close range. The other young man who was arrested was identified as Wa'el Fu'ad Khaled Da'mi, 23. According to Palestinians who travel regularly in the area, Israeli forces seldom use the road where the incident occurred.

Israeli military sources claimed that "Israeli forces killed a Palestinian who was traveling in a suspicious taxi, in which 2 young men were traveling." The same sources further claimed that "the officer stopped the car, while soldiers ordered the two young men to get out of the car... the two young men got out of the car with their hands up... one of the young men to pull out a pistol, so the soldiers fired at him." The same sources claimed that "this activist planned a suicide bombing in Kafar Yabats in July 2003, which left dead an Israeli woman, and other suicide bombings."

Case (22)

Date: 5 September 2003

Targeted person: “Mohammed Yousef” ‘Abdul Rahim al-Hanbali, 28, from Nablus

At approximately 22:30 on Thursday, 4 September 2003, an undercover unit of Israeli occupying forces moved into al-Makhfiya neighborhood in the southwest of Nablus, using 4 Palestinian taxis and a Ford minibus. Israeli soldiers surrounded a 600-square-meter, 7-storey apartment building owned by Ja’far Rezeq al-Masri. Soon after, approximately 30 Israeli military vehicles moved into the area, accompanied by a helicopter gun-ship. Israeli soldiers used megaphones to order the residents to vacate the building and neighboring houses. The residents were gathered together and taken to the nearby Sa’id Ben ‘Aamer elementary school, where they were detained for several hours. Israeli soldiers then broke into the building, and, after coming under fire from the Palestinian gunman, evacuated the building.

At approximately 03:00 on Friday, 5 September 2003, Israeli forces attacked the fourth floor of the building with anti-tank missiles and broke into the building once again. A few hours later, Israeli soldiers were seen taking the gunman’s body out of the building. Later, he was identified as “Mohammed Yousef” ‘Abdul Rahim al-Hanbali, 28, an engineer from Nablus. Israeli occupying forces claimed that al-Hanbali was wanted for being the northern West Bank leader of ‘Ezziddin al-Qassam, the military wing of the Hamas movement. At approximately 09:00, as the Israeli military operation came to a close, occupying soldiers planted explosives on the first floor of the building. The building was completely leveled by the explosion. As a result, 48 Palestinians (8 families), including 30 children, have become homeless.

Case (23)

Date: 6 September 2003

Targeted persons:

- 1) Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, 65, from Gaza City**
- 2) Isma'il Haniya, 40, from Gaza City**

At approximately 16:00 on Saturday, 6 September 2003, an Israeli aircraft fired 1 missile into an apartment on the third floor of a residential building in al-Daraj neighborhood, a densely populated residential area in the centre of Gaza City. The building is owned by Dr. Marwan Abu Ras, a lecturer in Arabic Literature at the Islamic University in Gaza City, who was sustained injuries to his legs in the attack.

Sheikh Yassin and Isma'il Haniya were reported to have been visiting Abu Ras and were just leaving the building when the missile struck. The missile destroyed the third floor apartment and the rest of the building sustained serious structural damage. Several nearby buildings were also damaged.

12 other Palestinians in the area were injured, including a number of members of the Abu Ras family. All of the wounded, with the exception of Yassin and Haniya, were taken to Shifa Hospital in central Gaza City. Medical resources reported that there were 6 children among the wounded.

The Israeli government admitted responsibility for this assassination attempt. Israeli media reports quoted an Israeli military statement as saying that "the Israeli Air Force attacked a building, in which the leaders of Hamas, headed by Sheikh Yassin, 67, were meeting to plan attacks against Israeli targets." The statement also pledged to continue the war against Hamas and "terrorist organizations." The Israeli government spokesman stated that the assassination attempt was surgical in nature, and asserted that none of the leaders of Hamas is immune.

Case (24)

Date: 9 September 2003

Targeted persons:

- 1) Ahmed 'Othman Bader, 22, from Hebron**
- 2) 'Ezziddin Khader Misk, 24, from Hebron**

At approximately 02:00 on Tuesday, 9 September 2003, Israeli occupying forces, including a tank, 3 armored personnel carriers (APCs), 12 military jeeps and a military bulldozer, moved into the Abu Katila neighborhood in northwest Hebron. They imposed a curfew on the neighborhood and then surrounded an 8-storey apartment building, in which 14 families live. They opened fire and ordered residents to exit the building. Residents left the building and gathered in the yard. During this part of the operation, a resident, Basem Fathi Al-Dajani, 37, was injured and then taken away by Israeli soldiers. Israeli occupying forces conducted physical searches of the residents and then detained them in a nearby nursery school. At approximately 06:00, Israeli occupying forces called out to gunmen who they believed were still in the building to exit. Then, Israeli soldiers opened fire with heavy machine guns at the building from the north, the west and the south. At approximately 06:30, Israeli soldiers began firing tank shells at the building and a number of apartments sustained serious damage. This shooting and shelling continued for more than 4 hours. At approximately 10:20, 11-year-old Tha'er Mohammed Mansour Sayouri was hit in the head by a piece of shrapnel, killing him instantly. According to the child's father, Tha'er was hit while he was in the kitchen of his home which overlooks the western part of the targeted building. The house is located approximately 45m to the south of the targeted building. 18-year-old Taratil Anwar 'Abdul Hafez Abu Hamdiya, who was also at home in a nearby building, sustained a shrapnel wound to her pelvis.

At approximately 14:00, more Israeli military reinforcements, including 2 ambulances, were brought to the area. Israeli occupying forces also resumed shelling of the building. At approximately 15:00, an Israeli helicopter gunship launched 3 missiles at the building. At approximately 15:30, Israeli soldiers were seen bringing 2 of the residents who were detained in the nursery school and forcing them to wear white clothes similar to those of medical personnel. Then, Israeli soldiers forced the two residents to carry a stretcher and enter the building. At approximately 15:50, the two residents were seen removing a body from the building. Approximately 10 minutes later, they were seen again removing another body. Israeli soldiers transferred the two bodies to a military jeep which took them to an unknown destination. At approximately 18:05, Israeli soldiers planted

explosives on the ground floor of the building and detonated them. A part of the building was destroyed. Israeli soldiers detonated explosives in the building again at 19:10 and 20:00. At approximately 20:30, an Israeli military bulldozer started to level the remains of the building.

‘Othman Bader, 68, told PCHR’s field worker in Hebron that at approximately 19:10, Israeli occupying forces took him to the headquarters of the military liaison in Hebron and asked him to identify the two bodies. The victims were identified as:

1. Ahmed ‘Othman Bader, 22, hit by shrapnel throughout the body;
2. ‘Ezziddin Khader Misk, 24, hit by shrapnel throughout the body.

Case (25)

Date: 10 September 2003

The main targeted person: Dr. Mahmoud al-Zahhar, 58, from Gaza City
Another targeted person: Shehda Yousef al-Deeri, 32, from Gaza City

At approximately 10:15 on Wednesday, 10 September 2003, Israeli warplanes launched missiles at Dr. Mahmoud al-Zahhar's house in the densely populated al-Sabra neighborhood in central Gaza City. The 2-storey house was totally demolished in the attack. Ambulance and rescue personnel arrived at the scene shortly after the strike and removed 2 bodies from the rubble of the building. The 2 victims were later identified as al-Zahhar's son, Khaled, 25, and his bodyguard, Shehda Yousef al-Deeri, 32, from Gaza City. Al-Zahhar was moderately wounded in the attack and more than 20 other Palestinian civilians, including al-Zahhar's wife and daughter, were also wounded. Medical sources described the conditions of several of the wounded, including al-Zahhar's wife, as serious.

PCHR field workers reported that the Israeli attack also damaged several neighboring houses, as well as the nearby al-Rahma mosque.

Case (26)

Date: 16 September 2003

Targeted person: Ahmed Fawzi Abu Doush, 25, from Dura near Hebron

At approximately 08:20, an undercover unit of Israeli occupying forces infiltrated into Sinjar neighborhood between Hebron and Dura village, using a Palestinian registered civilian car. 6-7 Israeli soldiers in civilian clothes and armed with machine guns, got out of the car. They moved through a dirt road towards the house of Ahmed Mahmoud Dayadh Nassar, the victim's uncle, approximately 100m away from the main road. In the meantime, Ahmed Abu Doush, known as "Majed", was leaving the house after a short visit. As soon as Israeli soldiers noticed him, they opened fire without warning from a distance of about 20 meters. He was killed instantly by about 10 live bullets in the head, the neck and the chest. The victim was left on the ground until 12:00, when they removed the body to an unknown destination.

Soon, 2 tanks, 3 armored personnel carriers and a number of military jeeps and a helicopter of the Israeli occupying forces arrived at the area. Israeli forces used megaphones to call on residents of the 160-square-meter, 3-storey house to leave the premises with their hands raised in the air. Residents of the building cooperated with the order and left the building. Israeli soldiers moved the residents away from the house and, at approximately 13:00, the Israeli occupying forces planted explosives inside the house and destroyed it. The demolition left 18 people (5 families) homeless. PCHR's field worker in Hebron reported that he saw an Israeli bulldozer searching for probable bodies of wanted Palestinians under the ruins of the house.

Upon their withdrawal from the area, Israeli forces arrested Khaled and Yousef Ahmed Nassar, 25 and 28 respectively. Israeli occupying forces claimed that Ahmed Abu Doush had been wanted for 2 years for being a member of Islamic Jihad.

Case (27)

Date: 18 September 2003

Targeted persons: Jihad ‘Ezzat Abu Swaireh, 34, from Nusseirat refugee camp

Early on Thursday, 18 September 2003, Israeli occupying forces, supported by helicopters, moved into Nusseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip to arrest Jihad ‘Ezzat Abu Swaireh, 34, allegedly wanted by Israeli forces. They surrounded his house and seized a neighboring house, using it as a military site from which they opened fire at Abu Swaireh’s house. Israeli forces called on Abu Swaireh through a megaphone to surrender, but he remained inside to resist the Israeli forces, while his wife and children left the building. Soon after, Israeli helicopter gun-ships attacked the house, killing Abu Swaireh who was reportedly within close proximity to the house and Israeli soldiers ordered one of his relatives to identify him. They then planted explosives inside the house and destroyed it, leaving Abu Swaireh’s body amongst the rubble of the building. A number of neighboring houses were severely damaged and Abu Swaireh’s father and brother were wounded in the incident. The father died from his wound on 26 September 2003.

Case (28)

Date: 22 September 2003

Targeted person: Bassel Shafiq ‘Abdul Qader al-Qawasmi, 26, from Hebron

At approximately 02:15, Israeli occupying forces, reinforced by heavy military vehicles, moved into al-Bassa neighborhood in the west of Hebron. Covered by indiscriminate shooting, Israeli troops surrounded the house of Akram Mustafa ‘Abdul Hafez Shahin, home to 5 people, including a handicapped child. Israeli soldiers opened fire at the house from a distance of approximately 100m. At approximately 02:40, Israeli soldiers used megaphones to order residents of the house to immediately evacuate the house. The residents left the property and Israeli soldiers held the children in a neighboring house, and handcuffed and interrogated the owner’s wife, Zohour Hanin Shahin, 55. At approximately 03:10, Israeli occupying forces again opened fire at the house with heavy artillery, targeting it from 3 positions. At around 05:40, Israeli forces, accompanied by a bulldozer demolished the remaining structure of the house. At approximately 08:30, Israeli occupying forces fired 5 shells destroying a water-well near the house. The bulldozer continued to level the remains of the property and was later seen removing a body from the ruins. Witnesses reported seeing Israeli soldiers mutilating the body before taking it to an unknown destination. Israeli occupying forces later identified the body as that of Bassel Shafiq ‘Abdul Qader al-Qawasmi, 26, who was allegedly wanted by Israeli occupying forces for his activities in the Hamas movement. Israeli occupying forces kept the body and refused to deliver it to the victim’s family.

Case (29)

Date: 25 September 2003

Targeted persons:

- 1) Diab ‘Abdul Rahim ‘Abdul Rahman Shuwaiki, 30, from Hebron**
- 2) ‘Abdul Rahman ‘Abdul Aziz al-Talahmi, 27, from Dura village near Hebron**
- 3) ‘Ammar ‘Abdul Rahim Shwaiki, 19, from Hebron**

At approximately 00:10 on Thursday, 25 September 2003, an undercover unit of Israeli occupying forces in civilian cars, reinforced by infantry, more than 10 military jeeps, two tanks and an ambulance, infiltrated into the southwest of ‘Eissi neighbourhood in the west of Hebron. At approximately 01:00, these forces deployed in the area in a combat position. They surrounded a cave located in a vineyard of the area. After raiding a number of civilian houses and confining the residents of these houses to a single room, several Israeli snipers took positions on the roofs of the appropriated buildings. At approximately 01:30, residents of the area heard sounds of intense gunfire. At approximately 01:45, they heard Israeli soldiers ordering a person to raise his hands and take off his clothes, while the targeted individual repeatedly yelled: “I am ‘Ammar.” Approximately an hour after “Ammar” surrendered and was taken into custody, residents in the area heard sounds of 3 live bullets being fired from the local where “Ammar” was being held by Israeli soldiers, approximately 50m away from the cave. According to eyewitnesses, Israeli soldiers fired at ‘Ammar Shwaiki, 19, who immediately shouted that he was wounded. Israeli soldiers handcuffed and arrested him. He was taken to a hospital in occupied Jerusalem and was treated for 3 bullets wounds in the right shoulder. At approximately 06:50, Israeli soldiers removed the bodies of two Palestinians who were killed by Israeli shooting during the operation:

1. Diab ‘Abdul Rahim ‘Abdul Rahman Shuwaiki, 30, allegedly wanted by Israeli authorities for being the leader of al-Quds Brigade, the military wing of the Islamic Jihad in Hebron; and
2. ‘Abdul Rahman ‘Abdul Aziz al-Qeeq al-Talahmi, 27, from Dura, west of Hebron, allegedly wanted for being a member of the Islamic Jihad.

It is worth noting that Israeli occupying forces attempted to assassinate Shwaiki in the north of Hebron approximately 18 months ago, however, he survived the attempt. On 25 September 2002, Israeli occupying forces destroyed his house and the house of his parents’ in the west of Hebron.

Conclusion

Israeli occupying forces commit extra- judicial assassinations against Palestinian field and political activists of various organizations, despite the fact that it is usually possible for them to arrest these activists and prosecute them in a proper judicial forum. This policy of extra- judicial assassination has been officially adopted by the Israeli political and military establishments, and judicially sustained by the Israeli Supreme Court, in contradiction of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Furthermore, international complacency concerning this issue has reinforced Israel's ability to continue its policy of extra- judicial assassinations; acts which constitute war crimes under international humanitarian law, and which the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions are legally obligated to take all steps necessary to prevent. In contravention of this obligation the United States, a signatory of the Fourth Geneva Convention, has continued to provide strong military and political support for the illegal assassination policy that Israel has adopted.

In the face of Israeli practices, PCHR calls upon the international community and the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949:

1. To immediately intervene to stop war crimes committed by Israeli occupation forces against Palestinian civilians and to force Israeli to respect the Fourth Geneva Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT);
2. To take concrete measures to stop war crimes and other violations of international humanitarian law committed by Israeli occupation forces against Palestinian civilians and ensure Israel's respect for the Fourth Convention in the OPT;
3. To provide immediate international protection for Palestinian civilians in the OPT .

Assassinations Committed by Israeli Occupation Forces 1 May – 28 September 2003

No.	Date	Place of the incident	Name (T)/ (N) ^o	Age	Area of residence	Parts of the body hit	Circumstances
1.	08/05/03	Gaza	1) Eyad 'Eissa al-Baik (T)	27	Beit Lahia	Throughout the body	Israeli helicopters shelled his car in Gaza City
2.	15/05/03	Ramallah					3 non-targeted persons were injured, while the targeted person, Darwish al-Dihdar, 40, from Bitounia, survived
3.	29/05/03	Al-Qarara, Khan Yunis	2) Mohammed Jihad al-Qedra (T)	25	Al-Qarara, Khan Yunis	3 live bullets in the chest, the abdomen and the thigh	Israeli soldiers raided his house and shot him dead
4.	10/06/03	Gaza	3) Mustapha 'Abdul Rahim Saleh (T) 4) Khadra Yousef Abu Hamada (N) 5) Amal Nemer al-Jarousha (N) ¹ 6) Hamed Mohammed Habboush (N) ²	30 30 8 43	Gaza Gaza Gaza	Throughout the body	The attack targeted Dr. 'Abdul 'Aziz al-Rantissi, a leader of Hamas movement, who was traveling in his car together with his son and 2 bodyguards. 30 people were injured, including a member of PCHR's staff and 8 children.

^o: T: targeted persons; N: not targeted.

5.	10/06/03	Jabalya	7) Mohammed Favez ' Abed Rabbu (N) 8) Hammouda Faraj ' Abed Rabbu (N) 9) Miriam Rajab ' Abed Rabbu (N)	25	Jabalya refugee camp	Shrapnel in the head The chest and the abdomen Throughout the body	Two activists of Hamas movement survived the attack, whereas 30 people were injured, including 8 children
6.	11/06/03	Gaza	10) Suhail No'man Abu Nahel (T) 11) Titi Mas'oud (T) 12) Yasser Hassan Humaid (N) 13) Khalil Hassan Humaid (N) 14) 'Azzam Husni al-Je'el (N) 15) Majeda Mahmoud Dalloul (N) 16) Samia Mahmoud Dalloul (N) 17) Rateb Mahfouz al-Je'el (N) 18) Yassin Murtaja (N)	30 36 35 33 40 20 25 55 62	Al-Shati Jabalaya Gaza Gaza Gaza Gaza Gaza Gaza	Throughout the body	Israeli helicopter gunships attacked the car of Abu Nahal and Mas'oud; 35 Palestinian civilians were wounded, including 14 children

¹ Died from her injuries on 15 June 2003.

² Died from his injuries on 18 June 2003.

7.	11/06/03	Gaza	19) Mohammed 'Aadel 20) Doghmosh (T) Rawi Abu Kunnail (T)	23	Gaza	Throughout the body	2 Israeli helicopter gunships attacked their car when they got out of it to have dinner
8.	12/06/03	Gaza	21) Yasser Mohammed Taha (T) 22) Islam Sa'id 'Abdullah (N) 23) Afnan Yasser Taha (N) 24) Jihad Jasser al-Samoudi (N) 25) Ahmed Mohammed Samour (N) 26) Sa'ed Ziad Ghabyen (N) 27) Mohammed Khalil Matar (N) 28) Salim Sa'id Salha (N) ³	37 22 1 36 30 30 34 41	Al-Boreij Al-Boreij Al-Boreij Gaza Al-Shati Gaza Al-Shati Gaza	Throughout the body	Israeli helicopter gunships attacked Yasser Taha's car, in which he, his pregnant wife and their infant were traveling. 20 other civilians were wounded.
9.	12/06/03	Jenin	29) Fadi Tayseer Jardat (T) 30) Saleh Suleiman Jaradat (N)	23 33	Seilat al-Harthia	The neck, the chest and the hand The forehead, the chest, the neck and the abdomen	An Israeli military undercover unit attacked them while they were near Saleh's house
10.	13/06/03	Gaza	31) Fu'ad Yousef 'Abdullah	26	Jabal'ya	Throughout	The attack targeted al-

³ Died from his injuries on the following day.

⁴ Died from his injuries on 21 June 2003.

			al-Liddawi (T) 32) Hassan 'Atiya Abu 'Eida (N) ⁴	54	Gaza	the body	Liddawi and his colleague who could escape. 28 civilians were wounded, including 11 children
11.	21/06/03	Hebron	33) 'Abdullah 'Abdul Qader al-Qawasmi (T)	43	Hebron	The head and the chest	An Israeli military undercover unit shot him dead as he went out of a mosque
12.	25/06/03	'Abasan, Khan Y unis	34) Akram 'Ali Farhan (N) 35) Nivin Ahmed Abu Rujaila (N)	29 19	Khan Y unis	Throughout the body	Israeli helicopter gunships attacked a car, in which an activist of Hamas movement was traveling. The activist and 12 civilians were wounded.
13.	14/08/03	Hebron	36) Mohammed Ayoub Seder (T)	28	Hebron	Throughout the body	Israeli forces surrounded a house where he was hiding and destroyed it over him.
14.	21/08/03	Gaza	37) Isma'il Hassan Abu Shanab (T) 38) Mo'men Mohammed Baroud (T) 39) Hani Majed Abu al- 'Amrain (T) 40) Sabra Salem Hamdia (N) ⁵	53 24 23 70	Gaza	Throughout the body	Israeli helicopter gunships attacked their car in Gaza. 19 civilians were also wounded

⁵ Died for his injuries on 28 August 2003.

15.	22/08/03	Nablus	41) Khaled Amin al-Namroui (T)	35	'Ein Beit al-Maa', Nablus	The chest and the abdomen	Israeli forces fired at 3 young men who were hiding on the roof of Rafidya Hospital in Nablus. Al-Namroui was killed and the two other young men were injured
16.	24/08/03	Gaza	42) Ahmed Rushdi Eshtaiwi (T)	24	Gaza	Throughout the body	Israeli helicopters chased them and launched 4 missiles at them.
			43) Waheed Hamed al-Hams (T)	21	Rafah		
			44) Ahmed Mohammed Abu Hilal (T)	23	Rafah		
			45) Mohammed Kana'an Abu Lebda (T)	20	Rafah		
			46) Khaled Mahmoud Mas'oud (T) ⁶	26	Jabalya	Throughout the body	
17.	26/08/03	Jabalya	47) Y unis Mohammed al-Hamalawi (N)	80			Israeli helicopter gunships attacked a civilian car, in which 3 activists of Hamas movement were traveling. 28 civilians were also wounded.
			48) Mohammed Ibrahim Ba'lousha (N) ⁷	17			
			49) Sanaa' Jamil al-Da'our (N) ⁸	9			
18.	28/08/03	Khan Y unis	50) Hamdi Hassan Kalakh (T)	35	Khan Y unis	Throughout the body	An Israeli helicopter attacked an animal cart, which Kalakh was riding

⁶ He died from his injuries on 6 September 2003.

⁷ Died from his injuries on 27 August 2003.

⁸ Died from her injuries on 2 September 2003.

19.	30/08/03	Nusseirat	51) Mahmound "Abdullah" 'Agel (T) 52) Farid Youssef Mait (T)	36 40	Al-Boreij	Throughout the body	Israeli helicopter gunships attacked their car. 'Agel escaped, but one of the helicopters chased and killed him. 4 civilians were also wounded.
20.	01/09/03	Gaza	53) Khader Badawi al- Husari (T)	35	Gaza	Throughout the body	Israeli helicopter gunships attacked a civilian car, in which 4 persons were traveling. Al-Husari was killed, while the other three persons were able to escape. 20 civilians were wounded, including 7 children.
21.	02/09/03	Al-Zawia, Tulkarm	54) 'Abdul Qader Mohammed Da'mi (T)	21	Tulkarm	The head, the chest, the abdomen and the legs	An Israeli military jeep intercepted a civilian car, in which 2 persons were traveling. Israeli soldiers fired at the car from a close distance. Da'mi was killed and the other persons was killed and arrested.
22.	05/09/03	Nablus	55) Mohammed "Yousef" 'Abdul Rahim al-Hanbali (T)	28	Nablus	Throughout the body	An Israeli military undercover unit moved into al-Makhfiya area. Israeli soldiers

							surrounded a house, where al-Hanbali was hiding and shelled it.
23.	06/09/03	Gaza					An Israeli warplane launched a missile at the third floor of a house, where Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and Iama'il Hania, prominent leaders of Hamas movement, were present. The two and 12 other civilians were injured.
24.	09/09/03	Hebron	56) Ahmed 'Othman Bader (T) 57) 'Ezziddin Khader Misk (T) 58) Tha'er Mohammed Sayouri (N)	22 24 11	Hebron	Throughout the body Throughout the body The head	Israeli forces surrounded and shelled a house.
25.	10/09/03	Gaza	59) Shehda Yousef al-Deeri (T) 60) Khaled Mahmoud al-Zahhar (N)	32 25	Gaza	Throughout the body	An Israeli warplane attacked the house of Dr, Mahmoud al-Zahhar, a prominent leader of Hamas. More than 20 civilians were also injured.
26.	26/09/03	Hebron	61) Ahmed Fawzi Abu Doush (T)	25	Dura, Hebron	The head, the neck and the chest	An Israeli military undercover shot him dead from a close distance.

Assassination of Palestinians ... An Israeli Official Policy Report on Extra-Judicial Killings Committed by the Israeli Occupation Forces

27.	18/09/03	Nusseirat	62) Jihad 'Ezzat Abu Swaireh (T) 63) 'Ezzat Abu Swaireh (N) ⁹	34 70	Nusseirat	Throughout the body	Israeli forces surrounded and shelled Abu Swaireh's house.
28.	22/09/03	Hebron	64) Bassel Shafiq al-Qawasmī (T)	26	Hebron	Throughout the body	Israeli forces surrounded and shelled his house.
29.	25/09/03	Hebron	65) Diab 'Abdul Rahim Shuwaiki (T) 66) 'Abdul Rahman 'Abdul Aziz al-Talahmi (T)	27 26	Hebron Dura, Hebron	Throughout the body	Israeli forces surrounded 3 Palestinians in a cave near Hebron. Two were killed and the third was wounded and arrested.

⁹ Died from his injuries on 26 September 2003.