Ref: 129/2012

Photo by PCHR

The number of Palestinians killed by Israeli Occupation Forces in the course of the offensive on the Gaza Strip, that has been ongoing for the fifth consecutive day, has increased to 51, including 27 civilians. The civilian deaths include 10 children and 5 women. Additionally, 535 Palestinians, including 520 civilians, have been wounded – this number includes 140 children and 83 women. Israeli airstrikes over the past 24 hours have been intense and severe, and have targeted civilian houses in disregard of the lives of their residents. They have targeted media offices, wounding 10 journalists, in an attempt to prevent them from reporting on crimes committed against Palestinian civilians. They have also targeted governmental facilities located in densely-populated areas, causing civilian causalities and extensive damage to civilian property.

The latest developments since the press release issued by PCHR yesterday noon, 17 November 2012, have been as follows:

The Northern Gaza Strip:

Since Saturday evening, 17 November 2012, Israeli forces have launched 65 airstrikes targeting a police station, houses of members of armed groups, agricultural plots and open areas. Israeli gunboats also fired 40 artillery shells at the shore. As a result of these attacks, 2 Palestinian children have been killed, and 61 civilians, including 18 children and 8 women, have been wounded.

At approximately 02:00 on Sunday, Tamer Salama Eseifan, 4, and his sister Jumana, 2, were killed when an Israeli warplane fired a missile at an agricultural plot belonging to the Masoud family near al-Bashir Mosque in Tal al-Zatar area in Jabalya town. A house belonging to Salama Ibrahim Eseifan was destroyed and his 2 children were killed. As a result of other airstrikes, a clinic, a food supply centre and a social services centre of UNRWA, a fuel station, the office of the Palestine Theologians Association and dozens of houses, shops and cars were heavily damaged. Four houses were completely destroyed by Israeli airstrikes. Israeli drones first fired warning missiles in the vicinity of these houses and Israeli fighter jets then bombarded and destroyed them.

Gaza City:

Israeli forces have launched dozens of airstrikes on Gaza City targeting media offices, houses and security sites. Israeli warplanes bombarded an office of al-Quds Satellite Channel on the 11th floor of Shawa and Hussari building in al-Wihda Street in the centre of Gaza City. As a result of the attack, 7 journalists were wounded; one of them, 20-year-old Khader Haidar al-Zahhar, sustained serious wounds and his right leg was amputated. In another attack, Israeli warplanes bombarded the 15th floor of al-Shorouq building, where the office of al-Aqsa Television is located. The floor was extensively damaged, and 3 journalists working for Palestine Media Production, whose office is located on the 14th floor, were wounded. In other airstrikes, 5 Palestinians, including 3 civilians (two women and a child), were killed, and 50 civilians, including 7 women and 9 children, were wounded. These attacks were as follows:

At approximately 12:30 on Saturday, an Israeli warplane fired a missile at members of an armed group near a juice factory in al-Shujaiya neighborhood in the east of Gaza City, killing one of them.

At approximately 06:15 on Sunday, an Israeli warplane fired a missile at the garden of a house belonging to the al-Dib family in al-Mansoura Street in the al-Shujaiya neighborhood. As a result of the attack, Sadiya Mohammed al-Dib, 62, was killed while she was feeding chickens in the garden.

At approximately 07:10 on Sunday, Israeli warplanes fired a missile at a police station in al-Tuffah neighborhood in the east of the city, destroying it. A nearby house belonging to Othman Hussein Abdul Aal was also destroyed, and his wife, Nawal Faraj Abdul Aal, 53, was killed.

At approximately 11:30 on Sunday, Israeli gunboats stationed opposite Gaza beach fired an artillery shell at a member of a Palestinian armed group when he was near his house in Beach Camp, west of Gaza City, killing him. Additionally, 10-year-old Tasneem Zuhair Mohammed al-Nahhal, was killed.

The Central Gaza Strip:

Israeli forces have launched 23 airstrikes targeting agricultural areas, houses and other objects. As a result of these attacks, 6 Palestinians, including 4 civilians, one of whom is a child, have been killed, and 20 others, including 18 civilians, have been wounded – this number includes 4 children and 1 woman. The most significant attacks have been as follows:

At approximately 19:50 on Saturday, an Israeli warplane fired a missile at a gathering of Palestinian civilians in Wadi al-Salqa village, killing Ali Hassan Bin Saeed, 25, and wounding 3 others.

At approximately 20:00 on Saturday, an Israeli warplane fired a missile at a motorcycle on which 3 members of a Palestinian armed group were traveling, killing one of them and wounding the other two.

At approximately 20:30, an Israeli warplane fired a missile on a plot near a house belonging to Ahmed Salem Bin Saeed, 53, in al-Musaddar village, killing him and wounding another 6 civilians, 2 of whom sustained serious wounds.

At approximately 22:40 also on Saturday, an Israeli warplane fired a missile at a member of an armed group in Abu Arab area in Deir al-Balah, killing him.

At approximately 08:10 on Sunday, an Israeli warplane fired a missile at the fence of a house belonging to Yousef Abu Khousa in the east of al-Boreij refugee camp. As a result, Abu Khousa's child, 1-year-old Eyad, was killed. His other child and his nephew, aged 6 and 5 respectively, were also wounded.

Khan Yunis:

Israeli forces have launched 39 airstrikes, targeting a grocery shop, agricultural areas, a poultry farm, a space area, paramilitary training sites, members of armed groups and 2 houses of members of armed groups. As a result of these attacks, Samaher Khalil Mahmoud Qudaih, 28, was killed when Israeli forces bombarded the vicinity of her house in Khuzaa village, east of Khan Yunis on Saturday evening. Her husband's son was also seriously wounded. In other attacks, 10 civilians, including 3 women and 2 children, were wounded. Several houses and the European Gaza Hospital were also damaged because of targeting objects in their vicinities.

Rafah:

Israeli forces have launched 22 airstrikes, targeting houses, paramilitary training sites and members of armed groups. As a result of these attacks, two Palestinians, including 1 civilian, have been killed and another 25 civilians, including 8 children and 6 women, have been wounded. These attacks have been as follows:

On Sunday morning, during the evacuation of a house belonging to the Abu Nuqaira family in al-Shaboura refugee camp after Israeli forces had fired warning missiles at a nearby house belonging to a member of an armed group, an Israeli warplane fired a missile at the house, killing Ahmed Suleiman Abu Nuqaira, 61.

On Saturday evening, a member of an armed group was killed when an Israeli warplane fired a missile at him while he was riding a motorcycle in the east of Rafah. 2 civilian bystanders were also wounded in the attack.

PCHR reiterates condemnation, expresses utmost concern for these crimes, and:

1- Warns of deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip in light of this continuous Israeli military escalation, threats to expand military operations, and the continued tightened closure of the Gaza Strip; and

2- Calls upon the international community to act immediately to stop these crimes, and renews the call to the High Contracting Parties of the Fourth Geneva Convention to fulfill their obligation under Article 1 of the Convention to ensure that it is respected at all times, and their responsibilities under Article 146 to pursue perpetrators of serious violations of the Convention, which are determined in Article 147, which lists violations of the Convention amounting to war crimes.

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