



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING
FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN Rights
Registration No. 2795/2012
OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION

**ISRAELI FORCES CONTINUE TO HARASS
PALESTINIAN FAMILIES**



More than half-century of occupation and settlements has taken a heavy toll on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The patterns of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law that Israel has inflicted on peaceful Palestinians over the past decade have become all too familiar. The illegal settlement enterprise and related unlawful seizure and destruction of property, the demolitions and resultant forced displacement, settler violence, excessive use of force and possible extra-judicial killings, administrative and arbitrary detentions, collective punishment measures – these all remain at the core of human rights violations in the Occupied Palestinian

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Territory. Israel's blockade of Gaza enters its 11th year and frustration and despair continues to grow. Israeli security forces continue to use firearms almost on a daily basis along the Israeli designated "access restricted areas" on land and sea to enforce this closure.

Inside the occupied territories Palestinians continue to suffer from Israel's illegal military occupation, colonial policies and apartheid regime. This is entrenching the prolonged exile of Palestinians, and their descendants, forcibly displaced after 1947 and intentionally denied the right to return as stated in UN resolution 194.

The delivery of basic services in Gaza, the West Bank can only be expected to become more pressing moving forward; however although humanitarian assistance is critical, no matter how robust, it is not solution to ending Israeli occupation, which is the root cause of the human rights violations.

Impunity and lack of accountability has driven Israeli's human rights violations to new cycles of violence. The pursuant breakdown in human rights and systematic violations of the laws of war in the occupied Palestinian territory continue to be propped up by an Israeli legal system that is geared towards protecting the impunity of its armed forces and political leadership, and by ineffective intervention by the international community to secure justice and legal accountability.

To illustrate, Israeli occupation forces repeatedly raided Palestinian homes in Hebron over the course of a month harassing its occupants. Eye witnesses say "between 25 August and 20 September, "soldiers showed up at the family's home in the middle of the night on four different occasions...In the early hours of 20 September, dozens of soldiers showed up at the home – and, the events that unfolded were exceedingly severe even for the routine violence



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West Bank residents are subjected to...After soldiers had forced their way into the house, “the soldiers immediately dragged the father outside, then went inside and began assaulting other family members.”

These sources say “Soldiers raiding homes in the middle of the night has become a common part of life not only for the Karamah family, but across the West Bank,” they added “These raids, which take place also in areas that are ostensibly under the full control of the Palestinian Authority, are carried out with no need for a search warrant, whenever and wherever the military chooses, in keeping with the sweeping arbitrary powers it has granted itself. There is absolutely no justification for these actions, which are clearly designed to intimidate and terrify the residents.”

Additionally the residents of Gaza continue to face severe barriers in accessing justice in Israel. The overarching challenge remains the mounting legislative restrictions that shield the government from torts liability for its troops’ and commanders’ actions.

The international community including the UN is unwilling to conduct genuine, independent investigations into suspected war crimes and does not hold those responsible to account as required by international law.

ICSFT is concerned about the devastating failure of international community to exert real pressure on Israel, the occupying power, to bring its actions in line with its obligations under international humanitarian law and UN resolutions.

In this context ICSFT calls on the international community and UN to:

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1. Demand that Israel remove all barriers for Palestinians to access Israeli courts to pursue civil tort claims against the Israeli military's actions that include killings and damages;
2. In accordance with the accountability resolution adopted by the HRC one year ago, ensure that those responsible be held to account through appropriate fair and independent mechanisms;¹
3. Respond with practical steps to ensure Palestinian access to human rights, fundamentally the right to self-determination and right to return home;
4. End Israel's prolonged occupation;
5. Remind states that they have a collective duty to ensure accountability, justice and equality for Palestinians. As such encourage National governments to support boycott, divestment and sanctions activities and respond positively to calls for such initiatives. This is of utmost importance if the different actors are concerned about fulfilling their legal duty under international law.

¹ Resolution of the Human Rights Council, A/HRC/31/L.38, 22 March 2016