



Euro-Med Monitor
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Israel's Arbitrary Killings and its System of Structural Violence

Brief Report

October 2015

euromedmonitor.org

Israeli forces have used excessive force and committed arbitrary killings in the Palestinian territories for years. That trend escalated during the past few weeks, as Israeli soldiers deployed to the West Bank and Jerusalem used firearms against Palestinians suspected of involvement in attacks, as well as those already detained.

Example cases

- On October 12, 13-year-old **Ahmed Manasra** of Jerusalem was injured after being run over by a car and beaten with sticks and metal pipes in the town of Hezma, north of Jerusalem. Israeli sources claimed the teen attempted to stab an Israeli soldier. Video recordings show the teen lying on the ground, bleeding and crying for help, while Israeli voices were heard cursing him and wishing him to die.

An ambulance arrived at the scene, but no care was provided to the youth for 25 minutes. Manasra tried to stand up when he saw the vehicle but was prevented when a soldier kicked him. The boy has been admitted to the Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital with serious injuries, under continued detention.

The Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth described the incident as beginning when a “Palestinian child fought with an Israeli child, and the Israeli child shouted ‘saboteur.’” Then, the newspaper reported, Israeli soldiers injured the Palestinian boy and killed his cousin.

- On the same day, **Marah Bakri**, 16, was injured by Israeli soldiers when she left her school in the afternoon and waited at the station for the bus to take her to her home in Bet Hanina. An Israeli soldier, who claimed she tried to stab one of his peers, deliberately targeted Baker. A picture circulated on social media shows the girl in her school uniform surrounded by nine Israeli soldiers and security police, with some of pointing their guns at her. Another picture shows Bakri covered in blood and laying on the ground after she was injured by three bullets in her left hand and shrapnel in her face. She now is in Hadassah Ein Karem Hospital in Israel, where she is being held under detention and prevented from seeing her family.

Baker’s lawyer, Sana’a Dwaik, says Israeli police refused to produce any evidence of an attempted stabbing operation during the first court session in her trial last Tuesday. Instead, they claimed the evidence is too sensitive to be shown to the girl’s lawyer or the public.

- **Israa Abed**, 29, a Palestinian holding an Israeli ID, is another example of Israel’s deliberate targeting and arbitrary killing of civilians. On October 9, Israeli soldiers Israa her with four live bullets. Like the others, Israeli authorities claimed Abed

attempted to stab an Israeli soldier. However, video recordings from **surveillance** cameras in the central train station of the city of Afula, where the incident took place, documented Israeli authorities' reckless disregard for life. Eyewitnesses told a Euro-Med Monitor team that Abed was very scared and panicked when she found herself surrounded by Israeli soldiers pointing weapons at her. The soldiers shouted at her to remove her headscarf and drop her bag. The young woman refused to remove her *hijab*, but raised her hands and begged the officers not to shoot. Nonetheless, the soldiers shot her with four live bullets in the upper part of her body.

- On October 8, an Israeli police officer shot **Tha'er Abughazaleh**, 19, from Jerusalem after he stabbed an Israeli soldier and three others, causing minor injuries. The police later declared the man was shot while being chased by Israeli soldiers. However, photos show the Abughazaleh was shot in the head, with the bullet ending up near his head on the ground, which suggests he was killed point blank rather than during an attempted escape.
- On October 4, Israeli police shot and killed **Fadi Samir Mustafa Alloun**, 19, from the village of Issawiya near Jerusalem, under the pretext that he stabbed a 15-year-old Jewish boy. Eyewitnesses told Euro-Med Monitor that a group of Israeli settlers chased Alloun when he was walking in the Masrara area in Jerusalem. The settlers had gathered to protest the killing of two of their peers earlier in the morning. Apparently, when the settlers saw Alloun, they attempted to attack him before he ran to Haim Barlev Street. An Israeli police car arrived at the scene, and the officer shot seven live bullets toward the boy. Video recordings shared on Israeli websites show settlers chasing Alloun and attacking him in the Almasserarh area before he was shot.

Muhammed Ahmed, the family's lawyer, and Samir Alloun, Alloun's father, told Euro-Med Monitor that they asked the Israeli authorities to conduct an autopsy but they refused.

Killing civilians, or attempting to murder them, without any justification (for example, a real threat or danger), is prohibited by the Fourth Geneva Convention and its first protocol. The act is considered a "war crime" in accordance with Article (8(2)(a)(1,3). Even when the targeted person has engaged in an attack, it is not permissible to respond by shooting and killing when the person surrenders and there is no danger or threat.

Article 41 of the First Additional Protocol of Geneva Convention states that "a person incapable of fighting cannot be a target." In addition, the article illustrated says this prohibition includes any person who is arrested or otherwise detained by the enemy and is unable to fight due to injury or disease. Article 85 of the same protocol states that "making a person a target when knowing he is incapable of fighting is considered to be violation of the convention."

- On September 22, **Hadil Alhashlamoun**, 18, from Hebron, was killed at what is known as “Checkpoint 56,” where Palestinians are banned from passing through unless they live in the area.

According to eyewitnesses as well as her father, the girl was passing through the checkpoint when she was ordered to stop when the metal detector began ringing. A soldier asked to check her but she refused, requesting an inspection by a female instead. The witnesses said the male soldier then began shouting at her and shot her left leg, causing her to fall to the ground.

In contrast, Israeli authorities claim the teen was shot when soldiers discovered she was carrying a weapon and asked her to stop and drop it. When the girl continued walking, they said, the soldiers fired live bullets toward the ground near her and she raised a knife. The soldiers immediately shot her in the chest and legs, according to authorities at Shaarey Tzedeq Hospital, where she was transferred.

However, photos taken by a Brazilian volunteer from the World Union of Churches’ Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel, as well as testimony from other eyewitnesses, showed the teen posed no threat to Israeli soldiers. Rather, in reality, two soldiers shot a live bullet into her right knee, approached her and shot another bullet into her right thigh from a one-meter distance, then shot her in the pelvis, the abdomen, both forearms and her chest. The medical report suggests that many soldiers were shooting.

Testimonies of two of the eyewitnesses are contradictory; one said the young woman dropped a knife when she fell on the ground, while the other said no knife was seen. The photos taken by the Brazilian volunteer supports the latter version. Israeli authorities refused to release the video shot by the checkpoint’s surveillance camera, which also suggests the girl’s innocence. In any case, however, even if the girl had been holding a knife, it is clear that excessive force was used to control the 18-year-old girl.

Following the incident, Israeli soldiers allowed Alhashlamoun to bleed for 40 minutes and refused to let ambulances and medics provide medical assistance. Even when she was transferred to the hospital, medics did not give first aid, even though reports showed she required a breathing tube due to the dense fluid that filled her lungs.

Such acts are a violation of the Principles for the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions (ECOSOC Principles), which were endorsed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 15, 1989. The principles also state that firearms may not be used against persons except in the case of self-defense or the defense of others—and even then, only when an imminent threat of death or serious injury exists and intervention is

needed to prevent a crime or flight. In addition, the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials adopted by the UN General Assembly emphasizes that the “use of force by law enforcement officials should be exceptional.” While it states that law enforcement officials may be authorized to use force when reasonably necessary under the circumstances to prevent crime or assist in the lawful arrest of offenders or suspected offenders, it also clearly says that no force beyond that may be used.

- Another incident in which Israeli forces violated these principles occurred on August 17, when Israeli border police killed **Muhammed Bassam Amsha**, 25, from Kafr Ra'i in the district of Jenin, as passed through the Zaatara checkpoint. While Israeli police claimed Amsha was carrying a knife and attempted to stab an Israeli soldier, eyewitnesses report they did not see the man with any knives. On the following day, Israeli forces stormed Amsha's house, claiming they had photos showing him carrying a knife before being shot. However, when his father asked to see the photos, the Israeli officer refused.
- On July 23, Israeli forces killed **Falah Hamdi Zamel Abumaria**, 53, from the village of Beit Amr in Hebron. Soldiers stormed his house to detain his son, Muhammad; when they shot the younger man, Abumaria panicked and threw a pottery vase at the soldiers from his balcony. The soldiers responded by firing three live bullets at his chest. Israeli authorities claim the family refused to hand over their son and attacked the soldiers. However, according to Haidar Abumaria, Falah's other son, the soldiers beat and shot Muhammed as soon as they arrived at the house, critically injuring him. Falah then started cursing the soldiers and demanding that they leave the house. He was shot in the chest and soldiers prevented ambulances from reaching him before he died.

Call to action

The Geneva Conventions and the Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions state, "there shall be a thorough, prompt and impartial investigation of all suspected cases of extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions."

The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor calls on Israeli authorities to open a credible and transparent investigation into these incidents, and to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Ignoring such incidents gives a green light to other perpetrators and signals a complete disregard for human life. Moreover, the organization calls on the state parties to the Geneva Convention to take concrete steps to pressure Israel to comply with international law.

Moreover, the organization invites the two UN Special Rapporteurs charged with extrajudicial and arbitrary executions and human rights in the Palestinian territories to visit the region and open an investigation into the incidents described in this report.