



Thirteen Killed by the IOF and Thousands Injured in the OPT in December 2017

Al-Haq – 5 January 2018

Escalations have continued across the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) since 6 December 2017, in the wake of United States (US) President Trump's decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and to relocate the US Embassy to Jerusalem, in contravention of international law and long-standing international consensus on the status of Jerusalem.¹ Throughout the month of December 2017, 13 Palestinians were killed by the Israeli Occupying Forces (IOF) in the OPT, while 4,690 injuries were recorded in the same period by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS).² The aforementioned casualties are a result of the IOF's excessive use of force, including the launching of airstrikes on the Gaza Strip, the use of live fire to suppress protests, the shooting of rubber-coated metal bullets at crowds, the firing of tear gas canisters at protesters, and the beating of protesters by members of the IOF.³

1. Thirteen Palestinians Killed by the IOF in December 2017

Al-Haq documented the killing of thirteen Palestinians by the IOF in December 2017. Nine Palestinians were killed by the IOF during protests across the OPT. These are: **Mahmoud Abd Al-Majid Al-Masri**, 29, from Khan Younis, Gaza; **Basel Mustafa Ibrahim**, 29, from 'Anata in Jerusalem; **Yasser Naji Sukkar**, 23, from Al-Shuja'iyah, Gaza; **Ibrahim Nayef Abu Thuraya**, 29, a resident of Deir Al-Balah, Gaza; **Zakaria Adham Al-Kafarna**, 20, from Beit Hanoun, Gaza; **Muhammad Nabil Muheisen**, 29, a resident of Al-Shuja'iyah, Gaza; **Sharif Al-Abed Shalash**, 28, a resident of Jabaliya M. Camp, Gaza; **Muhammad Sami Al-Dahdouh**, 19, from Al-Zaitoun neighbourhood in Gaza; and **Jamal Muhammad Muslih**, 20, a resident of Al-Maghazi Camp in the central Gaza Strip.⁴ In addition, **Muhammad Amin 'Aqel**, 19, from Beit 'Ula, Hebron, was killed by the IOF while carrying out an alleged attack on 15

¹ Al-Haq, "Al-Haq Condemns United States Recognition of Jerusalem, in the occupied State of Palestine, as Israel's Capital" (6 December 2017), available at: <http://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/targets/third-party-states/1156-al-haq-condemns-united-states-recognition-of-jerusalem-in-the-occupied-state-of-palestine-as-israels-capital>.

² PRCS, Reports on Humanitarian Interventions by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, 7 – 27 December 2017: <https://www.palestinercs.org/index.php?page=post&pid=11186&catid=4&parentid=70>.

³ Al-Haq, "Suppression of Peaceful Assemblies in Jerusalem" (23 December 2017), available at: <http://www.alhaq.org/documentation/weekly-focuses/1163-suppression-of-peaceful-assemblies-in-jerusalem>.

⁴ Al-Haq, "Five Palestinians killed during Protests across the OPT since 7 December 2017" (19 December 2017), available at: <http://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/topics/right-to-life-and-body-integrity/1161-five-palestinians-killed-during-protests-across-the-opt-since-7-december-2017>.



December 2017 in Al-Bireh.⁵ In the same month, an additional three Palestinians were killed as a result of Israeli airstrikes on the Gaza Strip, including **Maher Mohammad Atallah**, 54, from Beit Lahia, **Mohammad Mohammad Al-Safadi**, 25, and **Mahmoud Mohammad Al-Atal**, 26, both from Gaza.⁶

Zakaria Adham Al-Kafarna, 20, a resident of Beit Hanoun in Gaza, participated in protests against the US decision on Jerusalem near the Beit Hanoun (Erez) Crossing in the northern Gaza Strip on Friday, 22 December 2017, at around 12:30 pm. Zakaria was among the first protesters to approach Gaza's eastern fence that day. The IOF were positioned behind earth mounds and cement blocks surrounding the Erez Crossing, firing tear gas and shooting live bullets at protesters. Youths threw stones at the IOF from a distance of more than 250 metres away and did not pose any threat to them. Around 1:30 pm, Zakaria was shot in the chest by the IOF. Zakaria, a father to a one-year-old daughter and whose wife is eight-months pregnant, was taken by an ambulance to the Indonesian Hospital in Beit Lahia where he was pronounced dead minutes later.⁷

On the same day, and at approximately 3:30 pm, **Muhammad Nabil Muheisen**, 29, a resident of Al-Shuja'iyah neighbourhood in Gaza, was injured during protests near Gaza's eastern fence, opposite the Nahal 'Oz military site. The IOF, positioned behind the fence, shot live bullets and fired tear gas at Palestinian protesters, including youths and children, despite them posing no threat to the IOF. Muhammad was shot with a live bullet in his upper left thigh, rupturing his main artery and causing severe bleeding. Paramedics took Muhammad to Al-Shifa Hospital, where he was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Muhammad was pronounced dead at around 4:00 pm that day after resuscitation attempts failed.⁸ Al-Haq documented 48 injuries between 1:30 and 6:00 pm in protests near Nahal 'Oz alone on 22 December 2017, including 13 injured by live fire, 11 directly injured by tear gas canisters, and 23 suffocations from inhaling tear gas.⁹

⁵ Al-Haq, "Five Palestinians killed during Protests across the OPT since 7 December 2017" (19 December 2017), available at: <http://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/topics/right-to-life-and-body-integrity/1161-five-palestinians-killed-during-protests-across-the-opt-since-7-december-2017>.

⁶ Al-Haq, "Escalation in the Gaza Strip: Israel Attacks Civilian Protesters and Launches Airstrikes" (15 December 2017), available at: <http://www.alhaq.org/documentation/weekly-focuses/1159-escalation-in-the-gaza-strip-israel-attacks-civilian-protesters-and-launches-airstrikes>.

⁷ Al-Haq Field Report, 26 December 2017. Al-Haq, Weekly Field Report, 18 – 24 December 2017, page 1. Al-Haq Affidavit No. 927/2017, given by Nuh Adham Al-Kafarna, a resident of Beit Hanoun, North Gaza Governorate, on 24 December 2017. Al-Haq Affidavit No. 928/2017, given by Diab Muhammad Al-Kafarna, a resident of Beit Hanoun, North Gaza Governorate, on 24 December 2017.

⁸ Al-Haq Field Report, 27 December 2017. Al-Haq Affidavit No. 942/2017, given by Haitham Riziq Abu Al-Lail, a resident of Al-Shate' Camp, Gaza Governorate, on 27 December 2017. Al-Haq Affidavit No. 922/2017, given by 'Adi 'Allam Hathat, a resident of Al-Sha'f neighbourhood, Gaza, on 27 December 2017.

⁹ Al-Haq Field Report, 27 December 2017. Al-Haq Field Report, 22 December 2017. Al-Haq, Weekly Field Report, 18 – 24 December 2017, page 1.



On Saturday, 23 December 2017, at approximately 3:00 am, **Sharif Al-Abed Shalash**, 28, a father of three and resident of Jabaliya M. Camp, was pronounced dead at the Indonesian Hospital in Beit Lahia after succumbing to a live bullet wound sustained in the stomach during protests in Gaza six days earlier. Sharif had arrived to protest near Gaza's eastern fence, east of Jabaliya, at around 10:30 am on Sunday, 17 December. He was approximately 15-20 metres from the first fence, while the IOF were positioned behind a second fence some 150 metres away. The IOF used live and rubber bullets and tear gas to suppress the protest. At around 12:30 pm, Sharif was shot in the stomach with a live bullet, and was taken to the Indonesian Hospital, where he underwent surgery and was then admitted to the ICU for six days. During this time, Sharif's condition showed no improvement and the Palestinian Ministry of Health issued an urgent medical referral for his treatment at Al-Makassed Hospital in occupied East Jerusalem. However, the IOF refused Sharif a medical travel permit through Erez and he died from his injury.¹⁰

On Sunday, 24 December 2017, **Muhammad Sami Al-Dahdouh**, 19, from from Al-Zaitoun neighbourhood in Gaza, was pronounced dead at Al-Quds Hospital after succumbing to a live bullet wound sustained in the neck on Friday, 8 December 2017. Muhammad had participated in protests near Gaza's eastern fence, opposite the Nahal 'Oz military site, east of Al-Shuja'iyah, among some 3,000 protesters that day. The IOF positioned behind the eastern fence shot live and rubber bullets and fired tear gas at the crowd. Around 3:45 pm, Muhammad was shot in the neck by the IOF as he was hanging the Palestinian flag on the eastern fence. Muhammad was taken to Al-Shifa Hospital, where he was treated in the ICU for two weeks without signs of improvement. He was then transferred to the ICU at Al-Quds Hospital in Gaza, where he was treated for another three days until he died on 24 December around 9:30 am. Al-Haq documented 36 injuries during the protests on 8 December near Nahal 'Oz, including ten injuries as a result of the use of live fire by the IOF.¹¹

On Friday, 29 December 2017, **Jamal Muhammad Muslih**, 20, a resident of Al-Maghazi Camp in the central Gaza Strip was shot while protesting some 30 metres from Gaza's eastern fence, east of Al-Breij Camp. The IOF were located behind earth mounds in front of the fence, directing their weapons in a sniper position at Palestinian protesters. At around 4:00 pm, the IOF shot Jamal with a live bullet, which penetrated his back and exited from his stomach. At the time of the shooting, Jamal was waving a Palestinian flag, posing

¹⁰ Al-Haq Field Report, 26 December 2017. Al-Haq Affidavit No. 925/2017, given by Ziyad Sa'id Abu Nada, a resident of Jabaliya M. Camp, North Gaza Governorate, on 26 December 2017. Al-Haq Affidavit No. 926/2017, given by Sa'id Al-Abed Shalash, a resident of Jabaliya M. Camp, North Gaza Governorate, on 26 December 2017. Al-Haq, Weekly Field Report, 18 – 24 December 2017, page 1.

¹¹ Al-Haq Field Report, 28 December 2017. Al-Haq Affidavit No. 923/2017, given by Zakaria Khalil 'Azzam, a resident of Al-Zaitoun neighbourhood in Gaza, on 28 December 2017. Al-Haq Affidavit No. 924/2017, given by 'Ala Hamdi Al-Sousi, a resident of Al-Nasr neighbourhood in Gaza, on 28 December 2017. Al-Haq, Weekly Field Report, 18 – 24 December 2017, page 1.



no threat to the IOF. Jamal was taken to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir Al-Balah, where he arrived in a critical condition and immediately underwent surgery. Jamal was then admitted to the ICU, but his condition continued to deteriorate. He was pronounced dead at around 4:00 am on Saturday, 30 December 2017, after succumbing to the injury he had sustained.¹²

The cases of Zakaria, Muhammad Nabil, Sharif, Muhammad Sami, and Jamal illustrate Israel's unnecessary, indiscriminate, and excessive use of lethal force against Palestinian civilians, accompanied by a lack of accountability by the IOF. In doing so, Israel's conduct constitutes a blatant disregard for its obligations, as Occupying Power, to ensure the safety and respect the lives of the occupied Palestinian population under international humanitarian law.¹³ Israel's use of lethal force to suppress Palestinian protests, where Palestinians pose no threat to the IOF, further violates the norms enshrined in the United Nations (UN) Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.¹⁴ In the aforementioned cases, Israel's conduct violates Palestinians' fundamental right to life, as enshrined under Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),¹⁵ and which Israel, as Occupying Power, must respect, protect, and fulfil.¹⁶

2. Thousands of Palestinians injured by the IOF in December 2017

Between 7 and 27 December 2017, 4,690 injuries were recorded by the PRCs in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.¹⁷ In the Gaza Strip, the IOF escalated the situation over the past month by launching airstrikes that killed three Palestinians and injured some 21 others, including an infant.¹⁸ **Yousef Imad Ishkayan**, six months, was

¹² Al-Haq Field Report, 30 December 2017. Al-Haq Affidavit No. 881/2017, give by Omar Hasan Abu 'Armana, a resident of Al-Breij Camp in the central Gaza Strip, on 30 December 2017. Al-Haq Affidavit No. 882/2017, given by Daoud Muhammad Al-Qabani, a resident of Al-Breij Camp in the central Gaza Strip, on 30 December 2017.

¹³ Articles 43 and 46, *Hague Convention (IV) Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land (hereinafter Hague Regulations)*, entered into force 18 October 1907.

¹⁴ Principle 9, UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (*hereinafter Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials*), 27 August to 7 September 1990.

¹⁵ Article 6, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, 99 UNTS 171, entered into force on 23 March 1976.

¹⁶ UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Israel, UN Doc CCPR/C/ISR/CO/4, 21 November 2014, paragraph 5.

¹⁷ PRCs, Reports on Humanitarian Interventions by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, 7 – 27 December 2017: <https://www.palestinercs.org/index.php?page=post&pid=11186&catid=4&parentid=70>.

¹⁸ Al-Haq, "Escalation in the Gaza Strip: Israel Attacks Civilian Protesters and Launches Airstrikes" (15 December 2017), available at: <http://www.alhaq.org/documentation/weekly-focuses/1159-escalation-in-the-gaza-strip-israel-attacks-civilian-protesters-and-launches-airstrikes>.



critically injured on 8 December 2017, at around 9:10 pm, during Israeli airstrikes on Al-Jidar military area in Beit Lahia, some 20 metres from Yousef’s family home.¹⁹ Yousef’s father, Imad, had left his home in the Al-Sheikh Zayed residential towers to buy milk and was about 200 metres away when he heard the airstrikes. He immediately rushed back to his wife and children and found his home in rubble, as a result of rocket fragments and glass shattering. Imad described the incident as follows:²⁰

“When I arrived to the tower I made sure that the strike actually hit the Al-Jidar military site. I went upstairs to my apartment where the cloud of dust was becoming thicker. I knocked at the door to enter but did not hear any response and no one answered the door. I became more worried for my wife and children so I broke into the apartment. There, I saw the rubble and rocks and I could feel broken glass on the floor. I started yelling, as loud as I could, calling for my daughters and my wife. I did not hear anybody so I started yelling for the neighbours, saying ‘help my children, they are dead. My children are dead’. I then heard my infant boy, Yousef, crying but my vision was unclear due to the cloud of dust and the power cut. Some neighbours then arrived and we started following Yousef’s crying, using the light from our phones. We found Yousef beneath one of the mattresses, under the rubble, and about four metres away from where he was sleeping in the room at the time I left the house. We checked on Yousef and he was heavily bleeding from his head. Some of the neighbours carried him and took him to the Indonesian Hospital near our home.” (Excerpt of Al-Haq Affidavit No. 878/2017, given by Imad Muhammad Ishkayan, on 10 December 2017.)

Imad continued to search for his three daughters and found his eldest unconscious under the rubble, while his two other daughters had suffered head injuries and were taken to the Indonesian Hospital to receive treatment and stitches. In the bedroom, which overlooked the targeted military site to the east, Imad found his wife **Muna Yousef Ishkayan** lying unconscious under a concrete column that had fallen on the left side of her body. Muna sustained three head injuries, two fractures in her left shoulder and arm, and severe bruises to her back and legs. Her six-month-old infant Yousef was transferred to the ICU at Al-Shifa Hospital in critical condition. During the same airstrike, Imad’s neighbour **Maher Mohammad Atallah**, 54, was killed.²¹

¹⁹ Al-Haq Affidavit No. 878/2017, given by Imad Muhammad Ishkayan, a resident of Al-Sheikh Zayed residential towers in Beit Lahia, North Gaza Governorate, on 10 December 2017. Al-Haq, Weekly Field Report, 4 – 10 December 2017.

²⁰ Al-Haq Affidavit No. 878/2017, given by Imad Muhammad Ishkayan, a resident of Al-Sheikh Zayed residential towers in Beit Lahia, North Gaza Governorate, on 10 December 2017.

²¹ Al-Haq, “Escalation in the Gaza Strip: Israel Attacks Civilian Protesters and Launches Airstrikes” (15 December 2017), available at: <http://www.alhaq.org/documentation/weekly-focuses/1159-escalation-in-the-gaza-strip-israel-attacks-civilian-protesters-and-launches-airstrikes>.



Israel, as Occupying Power, must respect the principles of necessity, proportionality, and precautions in attack, when conducting airstrikes on the occupied Gaza Strip. Under customary international humanitarian law, the conduct of military operations requires Israel to take all feasible precautions to avoid and minimize incidental loss of civilian life and injury to civilians.²² In the abovementioned case, Israel launched an airstrike on a military site in close proximity of a residential civilian area, leading to excessive incidental injuries and the killing of one Palestinian, in disregard for the principle of proportionality.



Yousef Imad Ishkayan, six months, after being injured by an Israeli airstrike on Beit Lahia on 8 December 2017.

During December 2017, Al-Haq further documented injuries as a result of live fire used by the IOF to suppress protests. PRCS recorded 351 such injuries between 7 and 27 December 2017 in the OPT.²³ On 11 December 2017, around 3:00 pm, **Randa Kamal Harara**, a 21-year-old student from Al-Tuffah in Gaza, headed towards a peaceful protest at Gaza's eastern fence, opposite the Nahal 'Oz military site. Together with a group of students, Randa protested against the US decision on Jerusalem by waving the Palestinian flag and chanting national slogans. She was injured by the IOF protesting some 300 metres from the fence:²⁴

"I heard gunshots fired by the IOF and saw tear gas canisters falling heavily around the area. I had been giving a TV interview for Palestine Today for about three minutes when I heard the IOF's gunshots in the area. When I finished my interview and returned to protest with the other students, while holding the Palestinian flag,

²² ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law Database, Rule 15, available at: https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule15.

²³ PRCS, Reports on Humanitarian Interventions by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, 7 – 27 December 2017: <https://www.palestinercs.org/index.php?page=post&pid=11186&catid=4&parentid=70>.

²⁴ Al-Haq Affidavit No. 869/2017, given by Randa Kamal Harara, a resident of Al-Tuffah, Gaza Governorate, on 13 December 2017.



I felt something metallic hit my left thigh. I felt intense pain and saw blood flowing from my thigh. I then realised that I had been shot by a live bullet. Some youths arrived to carry me to the ambulance some 500 metres from where we were. Then the ambulance took me to Al-Shifa Hospital in the city of Gaza. Once the doctors examined me and took the necessary X-ray images, they informed me that I was injured by a live bullet that had settled in my left thigh. The doctors performed surgery on me, during which they removed the bullet and treated my wounds. Then I was referred for further treatment in Al-Awda Hospital in Beit Lahia, where I was treated for another two hours, before going back home.” (Excerpt of Al-Haq Affidavit No. 869/2017, given by Randa Kamal Harara, on 13 December 2017.)

Israel’s use of live bullets to suppress peaceful protests constitutes an excessive use of force. Randa posed no threat to the IOF when she was injured by a live bullet, holding nothing but the Palestinian flag. The use of firearms is restricted to instances of “self-defence or defence of others against the imminent threat of death or serious injury”.²⁵ As such, Randa’s injury was the result of unnecessary and disproportionate use of lethal force by the IOF. Israel’s repressive measures further violated the protesters’ right of peaceful assembly, as enshrined under Article 21 of the ICCPR. In further instances documented by Al-Haq during the month of December 2017, the IOF assaulted Palestinian protesters in occupied East Jerusalem, forcefully dispersing crowds at Damascus Gate, beating protesters with their hands and batons, and kicking them with their boots.²⁶ Such conduct not only violates the right of peaceful assembly, it further amounts to ill-treatment in violation of Article 7 of the ICCPR.

Israel’s use of excessive force during protests at the northern entrance of Al-Bireh between 3:30 pm and 4:00 pm on Saturday, 9 December 2017, cost **Laith Abd Al-Rahman Kan’an**, 24, an eye. Laith was protesting among 300 others when he was injured in the right eye with what appeared to have been a projectile, shot by the IOF from some 50 to 70 metres away. The IOF had heavily fired tear gas canisters and sound grenades, and shot rubber-coated metal bullets to suppress the protest in Al-Bireh. An ambulance took Laith to Ramallah Hospital, where he found out that he had completely lost vision in his right eye. He was referred for an eye removal surgery at Al-Istishari Hospital.²⁷

Muhammad Othman Al-Farani, 14, from Abraj Al-Nada in North Gaza, was also injured in the right eye on Monday, 11 December 2017, during protests near the Beit Hanoun (Erez) Crossing in the northern Gaza Strip. The IOF were positioned behind Gaza’s eastern fence and in watch-towers along it, firing tear gas and shooting live bullets at protesters.

²⁵ Principle 9, Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.

²⁶ Al-Haq, “Suppression of Peaceful Assemblies in Jerusalem” (23 December 2017), available at: <http://www.alhaq.org/documentation/weekly-focuses/1163-suppression-of-peaceful-assemblies-in-jerusalem>.

²⁷ Al-Haq field documentation, 13 December 2017.



Muhammad was directly injured by a tear gas canister in the face at around 3:00 pm. The canister hit him between the eyes, then fell to the ground and gas erupted from it. Muhammad felt severe pain, especially in his right eye, and saw blood flowing from his face. Eyewitnesses confirm that the IOF, especially those in watch-towers, fired tear gas canisters directly at protesters rather than around them. Muhammad was taken by an ambulance to the Indonesian Hospital in Beit Lahia, where his injury was assessed as critical and he was immediately transferred to Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza. He remained there for two days and found out that he had suffered a fracture in the right side of his jaw and that his nose was broken. Muhammad also suffered a critical eye injury for which he was referred to the Eye Hospital in Gaza on Wednesday, 13 December 2017. There, Muhammad was told that he could no longer use his right eye and was taken into surgery the next day.²⁸ Between 7 and 27 December 2017, the PRCS recorded 61 direct injuries by tear gas canisters in the OPT.²⁹



Muhammad Al-Farani, 14, after losing his right eye as a result of an injury from a tear gas canister on 11 December 2017.

On Friday, 15 December 2017, the IOF injured another youth, **Muhammad Fadel Tamimi**, 15, from Nabi Saleh with a metal bullet, which penetrated his left cheek and settled in his left temporal lobe. The IOF had spread out in three different areas of Nabi Saleh that day, suppressing protests by firing tear gas canisters and sound grenades, and shooting at

²⁸ Al-Haq Affidavit No. 880/2017, given by Muhammad Othman Al-Farani, a resident of Abraj Al-Nada, North Gaza Governorate, on 20 December 2017.

²⁹ PRCS, Reports on Humanitarian Interventions by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, 7 – 27 December 2017: <https://www.palestinerics.org/index.php?page=post&pid=11186&catid=4&parentid=70>.



youths protesting. Between 2:00 and 3:00 pm, Muhammad and two other children went to Al-Ghumaz area in the south-west of the town of Nabi Saleh, where they heard that members of the IOF were hiding. The three children reached an area covered by trees in front of a high concrete wall. They had brought a ladder with them and Muhammad climbed over the wall to look behind it, when he saw a soldier hiding behind a tree a few metres away. Muhammad threw a stone at the soldier then bent over to tell his friends and, as soon as he raised his head over the wall again, he was shot in the face by the soldier. Muhammad was taken to a medical clinic in the nearby town of Beit Rima at around 3:20 pm. From there he was transported to Al-Istishari Hospital in Ramallah, which he reached in a state of unconsciousness. The hospital's medical report established that Muhammad had suffered head trauma from a bullet that was noted in his left temporal lobe. Muhammad underwent surgery the same day, which lasted from 9:30 pm until 5:00 am the next morning, and was then placed at the ICU where he was treated for ten days. Muhammad has now left the hospital but requires further treatment and another surgery six months from now. He cannot go to school until then.³⁰

The cases mentioned above illustrate the dangerous nature of weapons such as tear gas canisters, metal and rubber-coated metal bullets, which the IOF repeatedly use during protests. In many instances, possibly at times deliberately, the IOF directs such bullets at sensitive parts of the body. The Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials require that “[t]he development and deployment of non-lethal incapacitating weapons should be carefully evaluated in order to minimize the risk of endangering uninvolved persons, and the use of such weapons should be carefully controlled.”³¹ Yet, according to the PRCS, 785 injuries by rubber-coated metal bullets were recorded during protests across the OPT between 7 and 27 December 2017.³²

On 8 December 2017, at approximately 4:00 pm, and while covering protests at the northern entrance to Al-Bireh, **Ali Muhammad Dar Ali**, 34, Palestine TV's news correspondent in Ramallah and Al-Bireh, was also injured. The protest he was covering was violently suppressed by the IOF. At the time, Ali was surrounded by tens of journalists all of whom wore distinct “Press TV” uniforms. Ali was wearing a bulletproof vest bearing the word “Press”, in addition to a face mask to protect himself from the tear gas. The IOF, who were positioned about 70 metres away from the press, were firing sound grenades and metal bullets. Ali was standing in front of the camera, preparing to begin a live broadcast of the protest, when he heard something being fired from behind. A solid object hit him in the back of the head. He fell to the ground immediately and was unable to get up. Ali was

³⁰ Al-Haq Field Report, 21 December 2017.

³¹ Principle 3, Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.

³² PRCS, Reports on Humanitarian Interventions by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, 7 – 27 December 2017: <https://www.palestinerics.org/index.php?page=post&pid=11186&catid=4&parentid=70>.



taken to the Palestine Medical Complex in Ramallah where he found out he had fractured the third finger in his right hand, bruised several parts of his right hand, and injured the back of his head. Ali required two surgeries, one for his right hand and the other for his head injury.³³

Attacks on journalists are prohibited, while journalists operating in situations of armed conflict must be especially respected and protected by States parties to a conflict under customary international humanitarian law.³⁴ In line with UN Security Council Resolution 2222 (2015), “all parties involved in situations of armed conflict [must] respect the professional independence and rights of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel as civilians”.³⁵ Israel must afford journalists protection in the exercise of their freedom of expression under Article 19 of the ICCPR, to ensure a free, independent, and impartial media.³⁶

Over the years, Israel has systematically responded to Palestinian protests in the OPT through suppressive measures and excessive use of force, thriving on situations of instability to deepen its occupation.³⁷ Without accountability for widespread and systematic violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in the OPT, Israel’s impunity will continue to prevail and the rights of Palestinians will continue to be denied. Accordingly, Al-Haq calls for independent, impartial, prompt, thorough, effective, credible, and transparent investigations to be conducted by the IOF,³⁸ and for perpetrators to be held accountable for violations of international law, including international crimes, committed in the OPT.³⁹

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³³ Al-Haq Affidavit No. 875/2017, given by Ali Muhammad Dar Ali, a resident of Burham, Ramallah Governorate, on 12 December 2017.

³⁴ ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law Database, Rule 34, available at: https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule34.

³⁵ UN Security Council, Resolution 2222 (2015), UN Doc S/RES/2222 (2015), 27 May 2015, paragraph 9.

³⁶ UN Security Council, Resolution 2222 (2015), UN Doc S/RES/2222 (2015), 27 May 2015, paragraph 2.

³⁷ Al-Haq Organisation, East Jerusalem: Exploiting Instability to Deepen the Occupation (2015), available at: <http://www.alhaq.org/publications/publications-index/item/east-jerusalem>.

³⁸ UN Human Rights Committee, General comment No. 36 on article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, on the right to life, Revised draft prepared by the Rapporteur, Advance Unedited Version, paragraph 32.

³⁹ Al-Haq, “Five Palestinians killed during Protests across the OPT since 7 December 2017” (19 December 2017), available at: <http://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/topics/right-to-life-and-body-integrity/1161-five-palestinians-killed-during-protests-across-the-opt-since-7-december-2017>.