



CAIRO INSTITUTE
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES
Institut du Caire pour les études des droits de l'homme
مركز القاهرة لدراسات حقوق الإنسان

Thank you Mr President,

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights studies condemns in the strongest terms the Israeli air and ground offensive on the civilians of Gaza which has led to the death of over 600 Palestinians and has left over 3000 Palestinians injured. Latest reports by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs also indicate that the cumulative number of internally displaced persons has now exceeded 100,000.

We particularly condemn the targeting of Palestinian children who amount to one third of the total of casualties. This is without counting the lasting psychological and emotional effects this war will have on children surviving the offensive.

As an occupying power, Israel has obligations under international humanitarian law. Indeed, the Fourth Geneva Convention compels the occupying power to ensure the safety of the occupied population. Under the same Convention, Israel is also bound to refrain from collective punishment and from the destruction of the occupied population's property.

However, reports from the ground indicate that Israel's army, ' , has made no efforts to spare civilians' lives, in contravention with its obligation under international law to only shell military targets. The shelling of civilian houses, ambulances and hospitals, as well as the disproportionate amount of civilian casualties as a result of the ground invasion of Gaza, especially in the Shujai'ya neighbourhood, could amount to war crimes. Besides, the practice to warn civilians to leave their houses before the shelling starts should not be seen as an act of morality: indeed Mr President, with the current international blockade on Gaza, its residents have nowhere to go. The reoccurrence of these crimes over the past two decades proves a pattern and an intent to subject the population of Palestine to collective punishment in blatant national and international impunity.

CIHRS condemns to a lesser extent the ways in which some armed resistance groups have targeted civilians. Nevertheless affirms the right of the Palestinian people to resist the occupation and to confront - within the framework of respect for the principles of international humanitarian law - the crimes committed by this occupation.

CIHRS also calls on the Egyptian government to open the Rafah Crossing.

Over the years this Council has met and deliberated the targeted killings of civilians in the OPTs. Several Commission of Inquiries have been created. Nevertheless, this hasn't helped to stop the killing machine. The massacre of Shujai'ya as many other massacres committed in the context of this armed conflict is a result of decades of impunity. CIHRS reminds the Palestinian Authority of their obligation as the representatives of the Palestinian people to ratify the Rome Statute and we repeat our call to this council on the necessity to recommend the referral of the crimes committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territories since the start of

the work of this council to the International Criminal Court.

Thank you Mr President