

Jerusalem, 17 March 2019

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Mr. Santiago Canton  
Chair

The U.N. Commission of Inquiry on the 2018 protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

via email [coioptprotests@ohchr.org](mailto:coioptprotests@ohchr.org)

Dear Mr. Canton,

First of all, allow me to express my appreciation for the work you and your colleagues on the Col have done, towards the protection of civilians, and the realization of human rights.

Ahead of the forthcoming discussion with regards to the Col's report, enclosed please find a B'Tselem position paper, focusing on what Israel calls "investigations," but are in fact nothing more than organized whitewash. The enclosed position paper details why there can be no rational expectation for accountability from Israeli mechanisms, when the illegality of Israel's open fire policy itself is at the heart of the matter – a policy that isn't even being questioned domestically, let alone credibly investigated.

All this is nothing new – Israel has used the same distractions in the past. B'Tselem reports have already explored this very issue in detail (see [The Occupation's Fig Leaf: Israel's Military Law Enforcement System as a Whitewash Mechanism](#) [May 2016] and [Whitewash Protocol: The So-Called Investigation of Operation Protective Edge](#) [Sept. 2016]). If the same distractions are allowed to be successful once again, nothing will change. As you know, the price of impunity is no mere theoretical issue. It carries a cost in human life.

The position paper concludes thus:

A real change in Israeli policy will only take place if the international community demands it clearly and unequivocally, and if it stops allowing Israel to do no more than offer hollow promises of "investigation." The international community must make the most of its power and influence to compel Israel to cease the gunfire and change its policy. Then, and only then, when the smokescreen of investigations will no longer serve it, will Israel be forced to make a choice: whether to openly admit that it has no interest in accountability for the violation of Palestinians' human rights, including cases of security forces killing or injuring Palestinians, or else to make a profound and fundamental change in the way it operates. Until that time, there is nothing to be done but to stop cooperating with this tapestry of lies.

We call on you to clearly demonstrate, in action, how this tapestry of lies is rejected.

Most sincerely yours,

Hagai El-Ad  
Executive Director

