בצלם - מרכז המידע הישראלי לזכויות האדם בשטחים (ע.ר.)
بتسيلم - مركز المعلومات الإسرائيلي لحقوق الإنسان في الأراضي المحتلة
B'Tselem - The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories

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April 26, 2018

Mr. António Guterres
<u>Secretary General of the United Nations</u>

Your Excellency,

Ahead of today's Security Council open debate on the Middle East, I wanted to share with you and with the Members of the Council the names of the 35 unarmed Palestinian protesters killed by Israel inside the blockaded Gaza Strip since the weekly demonstrations began on March 30.

These are their names:

Jihad Ahmad Muhammad Fareinah, 34
Ahmad Ibrahim 'Ashur 'Odeh, 18
Amin Mahmoud Hamad Abu Mu'amar, 25
Mahmoud Sa'di Yunes Rahmi, 34
'Abd al-Fatah Bahajat 'Abd al-Fatah 'Abd a-Nabi, 18
Naji 'Abdallah Shehdeh Abu Hjeir, 24
Jihad Zuheir Salman Abu Jamus, 29
Muhammad Na'im Muhammad Abu 'Omar, 26
Muhammad Kamal Muhammad a-Najar, 25
Bader Fayeq Ibrahim a-Sabagh, 20
'Abd al-Qader Mardi Suliman al-Hawajri, 41
Fares Mahmoud Muhammad a-Raqab, 25
Ahmad 'Omar Muhammad 'Arafah, 25
Shadi Hamdan 'Ali al-Kashef, 33
Muhammad Sa'id Musa al-Haj Saleh, 32
Thaer Muhammad 'Abd a-Ra'uf Rab'ah, 30
'Alaa a-Din Yihya Isma'il a-Zamli, 15
Ibrahim Salah Ibrahim Abu Sh'ar, 17
Ibrahim Ziad Salameh al-'Ur, 20
Ousamah Khamis Muslem Qdeih, 38
Majdi Ramadan Musa Shabat, 37
Sedqi Taleb Muhammad Abu 'Ateiwi, 44
Hussein Muhammad 'Adnan Madi, 13
Yasser 'Abd a-Rahman Mustafa Murtaja, 30
Hamzah 'Eid Ramadan 'Abd al-'Aal, 22
Marwan 'Awwad Hamad Qdeih, 44
'Abdallah Muhammad 'Abdallah a-Shihri, 28
Islam Mahmoud Rushdi Hirzallah, 28
Ahmad Nabil Muhammad 'Aqel, 24
Ahmad Rashad 'Abdallah al-'Athamneh, 24

Muhammad Ibrahim Ayub Ayub, 14

Sa'ed 'Abd al-Majid 'Abd al-'Aal Abu Taha, 31

'Abdallah Muhammad Jebril a-Shamali, 19

Tahrir Mahmoud Sa'id Wahbah, 18

Ahmad Muhammad Ashraf Hassan Abu Hussein, 24

Many of them died immediately, or shortly after, they were hit. Others succumbed to their wounds days later. Like so many other Palestinians in Gaza, it is highly likely that they never had a chance to leave the small patch of land – roughly half the size of New York City – which is the Gaza Strip. They lived their lives without any political rights, devoid of any hope for a reasonable future, totally subject to the decisions and policies of the Israeli government.

These horrific casualty figures – the 35 Palestinians killed and 1,500 injured by live ammunition – are the predictable outcome of the manifestly illegal rules of engagement implemented during the demonstrations, of ordering soldiers to use lethal gunfire against unarmed demonstrators who pose no mortal danger. These orders are unlawful under both international law and Israeli law. Responsibility for these fatal outcomes rests with the policy makers and – above all – with Israel's prime minister, defense minister and chief of staff.

Extensive past experience clearly demonstrates that the recently announced Israeli "investigation" of some of these fatalities is nothing more than a whitewash mechanism. It is part of a façade designed to give the impression that Israel is abiding by its legal obligation to investigate. Recent statements by Israeli officials indicate that the announcement was only made in an attempt to forestall and prevent investigations by international bodies.

Unlike many other states that violate human rights, Israel insists that its unlawful actions are commensurate with international law, basing this argument on dubious legal interpretations that render the norms of international law hollow. Allowing Israel to continue shooting unarmed protesters, under the pretense it is legal, will further undercut the global effort to protect human rights in the post-WWII era, while Palestinians are the ones being made to pay the price.

Preventing further loss of life is a responsibility that must be shouldered without delay. Israel must immediately change its illegal rules of engagement that permit using live ammunition against unarmed demonstrators. The United Nations must do all in its power – and its responsibility – in order to protect Palestinian lives and uphold international norms.

Respectfully,

Hagai El-Ad
Executive Director
B'Tselem