



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)  
LEGAL AID BOARD

## **Palestine Authority Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Thursday 18 April 2019**

### **Information on the current security situation in Gaza/Palestine**

A report issued in November 2018 by the *International Crisis Group* notes that:

“ Hamas and Israel have been engaged in indirect ceasefire negotiations since the end of the official period of the Great March of Return on 15 May 2018... Since the beginning of the protests, on 30 March, more than 214 Palestinians have been killed and close to 18,000 injured. One Israeli soldier has also been killed by Palestinian gunfire...” (International Crisis Group (16 November 2018) *Rebuilding the Gaza Ceasefire*, p.1).

A report issued in 2019 by the *Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research* notes that:

“...in the Gaza Strip, the violence crisis between Hamas and Israel escalated to a limited war...” (Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (February 2019) *Conflict Barometer 2018*, p.15).

A report published in 2019 by *Freedom House* commenting on events of 2018 states that:

“More than 180 Palestinians were killed and thousands more were injured, in many cases by live ammunition from Israeli forces, during a series of demonstrations near the de facto border with Israel—known as the Great March of Return—that began in March and continued throughout the year” (Freedom House (2019) *Freedom in the World 2019, Gaza Strip*, p.1).

In March 2019 the *United States Department of State* issued a report commenting on events of 2018 including noting that:

“On March 30, Palestinians in Gaza launched the “March of Return,” a series of weekly protests along the fence between Gaza and Israel. The protests, some of which drew tens of thousands of people, and included armed terrorists, militants who launched incendiary devices into Israel, and unarmed protesters, continued throughout the year. Hamas took control of the weekly protests, and many of the protests were violent as encouraged by Hamas” (United States Department of State (13 March 2019) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2018, Israel, Golan Heights, West Bank, and Gaza*, p.61).

This report also states that:

“During the year Israeli forces killed Palestinians in the West Bank who were attempting or allegedly attempting to attack Israelis...” (ibid, p.64).

A report issued in February 2019 by the *United Nations Human Rights Council* states that:

“Over the past 10 years, Gaza and Israel have experienced successive violent confrontations; these included three major escalations with massive land and air attacks by Israeli security forces on Gaza and indiscriminate rocket attacks on Israel by Palestinian organized armed groups. Nearly 1,400 Palestinians and 13 Israelis were killed during the three weeks of hostilities in 2008 and 2009, during Operation Cast Lead; 174 Palestinians and six Israelis were killed during one week of hostilities in 2012; and 2,251 Palestinians and 71 Israelis were killed during 51 days of hostilities in mid-2014, during Operation Protective Edge...A ceasefire mediated by Egypt between Israel and Hamas was concluded in August 2014. Episodes of hostilities have since continued, and included Israeli airstrikes and incursions into Gaza, and indiscriminate rocket or mortar fire by Palestinian armed groups towards Israel” (United Nations Human Rights Council (25 February 2019) *Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, p.5).

In March 2019 the *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights* states that:

“The humanitarian and human rights crisis in Gaza, as well as the security of its population, deteriorated significantly in 2018, reflected in the high loss of life and injury suffered by Palestinians. The majority of the casualties occurred in the context of large-scale demonstrations along Israel's perimeter fence with Gaza, known as the "Great March of Return." The demonstrations, which began on 30 March 2018...called for the right of return for Palestinian refugees and an end to the blockade of Gaza. Although largely peaceful, some demonstrators reportedly burned tires, threw stones and Molotov cocktails, and flew kites bearing incendiary devices over the fence into Israel” (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (15 March 2019) *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 (March 2019) (Advance Unedited Version)*, p.3).

This document also states that:

“Tensions between Israeli settlers and Palestinians in the West Bank have reached a boiling point. Israeli settler violence increased significantly throughout 2018, resulting in the killing of three Palestinians, the injury of 83 others – including 20 children – and numerous cases of vandalism, stone-throwing and intimidation...Over 200 instances of violence by Israeli settlers were recorded in 2018, representing the highest monthly average of incidents since 2014...Meanwhile, 144 attacks by Palestinians against Israeli settlers and other Israeli civilians in the West Bank were reported in 2018, including seven fatalities...As of early 2019, the tension has shown no signs of abating, particularly in the governorates of Nablus, Hebron and Ramallah” (ibid, p.5).

In March 2019 *BBC News* points out that:

“Two Israelis have died after an attack by a Palestinian in the occupied West Bank on Sunday, Israeli officials say” (BBC News (18 March 2019) *Israeli soldier and rabbi killed in West Bank attack*

*BBC News* in March 2019 states that:

“Israel has reopened two boundary crossings with Gaza, a week after closing them due to a rocket attack...The past week has seen increased violence. Israel retaliated for the rocket attack by Palestinian militants in Gaza, and three Palestinians died in

border protests” (BBC News (31 March 2019) *Gaza violence: Crossings reopen after negotiated 'calm'*).

A report published in April 2019 by *Reuters* states that:

“A Palestinian tried to stab Israelis with a knife in the occupied West Bank on Wednesday and was shot dead by one of them, the Israeli military and a witness said...The West Bank, among territories where Palestinians seek statehood, has seen surges of street attacks on Israeli settlers and soldiers since U.S.-backed peace talks stalled in 2014. Palestinians say Israel's armed response has been excessive” (Reuters (3 April 2019) *Palestinian tries to stab West Bank settlers, is shot dead: Israel*

In April 2019 the *Armed Conflict Location and Events Dataset* notes that:

“In Palestine, Israeli airstrikes continued in Gaza targeting Palestinian groups launching incendiary devices into Israel and reportedly injuring two of them. Israeli forces also shelled three Hamas posts on Sunday despite the ceasefire, but did not conduct any airstrikes against Hamas targets. Along the coast, there were multiple reports of Israeli forces opening fire on Palestinian fishing boats and, in a rare event, Egyptian forces also opened fire on Palestinian fishermen and detained four of them. Meanwhile, last Friday, around 10,500 Palestinian demonstrators took part in the Great March of Return demonstrations along the Gazan border and at least 84 Palestinians were reportedly injured by Israeli forces during clashes. Palestinian media reported that Israeli forces used a new kind of red gas against demonstrators last week which caused temporary suffocation and a feeling of lethargy...In the West Bank, two deaths were reported as a result of Israeli-Palestinian violence. An Israeli settler reportedly opened fire and killed a Palestinian south of Nablus near Huwwarah checkpoint. Some sources stated that the Palestinian was attempting to carry out a stabbing, while other accounts said that the shooting was unprovoked. A second Palestinian was reportedly killed during violent clashes that broke out during an Israeli raid of Qalandia Refugee Camp. In another incident, dozens of teachers and students suffered from tear gas after Israeli forces fired live ammunition, rubber coated bullets, sound bombs, and tear gas canisters at the Hebron elementary school for unknown reasons...” (Armed Conflict Location and Events Dataset (9 April 2019) *ACLEL Regional Overview – Middle East*, pp.1-2).

In April 2019 the *Palestinian Centre for Human Rights* states that:

“Israeli forces continued to use excessive force against the peaceful protestors in the Gaza Strip. 115 civilians, including 28 children, 5 women and 3 journalists, were wounded. The injury of 2 of them was reported serious. 4 Palestinian civilians, including 2 children, were wounded in the West Bank. Israeli forces conducted 71 incursions into Palestinian communities in the West Bank and 3 other incursions into the Gaza Strip” (Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (11 April 2019) *Weekly Report On Israeli Human Rights Violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (04– 10 April 2019*, p.1)

A report published in April 2019 by the *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs* notes that:

“Four Palestinians, including two children, were killed by Israeli forces in the context of the ‘Great March of Return’ (GMR) demonstrations in the Gaza Strip, and another

1,456 were injured” (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (11 April 2019) *Protection of Civilians Report | 26 March - 8 April 2019*, p.1).

This document also states that:

“Israeli forces killed two Palestinians in two search and arrest operations in the West Bank. On 27 March, an 18-year-old Palestinian volunteer medic was shot and killed by Israeli forces while he was on duty during a military operation in the Duheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem; According to Palestinian sources, no clashes were ongoing in the area of the fatal shooting. On 2 April, in the vicinity of Qalandiya refugee camp, Israeli soldiers shot and killed a 24-year-old Palestinian man after clashes erupted between Palestinians and the Israeli army during the search and arrest operation. Another four Palestinians, including two children, were injured by live ammunition during these two incidents. Additionally, 304 Palestinians, including 239 children, were injured by Israeli forces in other clashes, mostly following search and arrest operations and protests in the West Bank” (ibid, p.1).

In April 2019 *Reuters* states that:

“Israeli troops shot dead a Palestinian teenager taking part in protests along the Gaza border on Friday, Palestinian health officials said, the first fatality since Gazans marked the one-year anniversary of the weekly demonstrations in March” (Reuters (12 April 2019) *Israeli soldiers kill Gaza teenager during border protest*

This document also states that:

“Tensions rose after a rocket fired from Gaza wounded seven Israelis north of Tel Aviv on March 25. Israel mounted a wave of air strikes following that attack on targets it said belonged to Hamas, the Islamist group which rules the coastal enclave” (ibid).

It is also reported in this document that:

“More than 200 Gazans have been killed by Israeli troops since the ‘Great March of Return’ started on March 30 last year, according to Gaza health officials. An Israeli soldier was also killed by a Palestinian sniper. Last month’s anniversary rally was smaller than expected, despite concerns that the event, during which four Palestinians were killed, would see a major escalation” (ibid).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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