

Israel's Collective Punishment of Palestinians in Operation Brother's Keeper - Lawyers Ask for British Intervention

By [Jews for Justice for Palestinians](#)
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[Jews for Justice for Palestinians](#)

Region: [Asia](#), [Middle East & North Africa](#)
Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#)
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The letter from Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights is followed by the statement from 11 human rights organisations.

[For the attention of: Right Hon William Hague MP](#)

Right Hon William Hague MP
Foreign Secretary
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
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24 June 2014

Dear Mr. Hague,

Re: Unnecessary violation of fundamental human rights and collective punishment by Israeli military during Operation Brother's Keeper

We write further to disturbing reports of Israel's recent extensive military activity in the occupied West Bank which raise serious concerns regarding unnecessary violation of fundamental human rights and collective punishment. We urge the British government to ensure that Israel's military cease actions which disregard the safety, welfare and basic rights of the Palestinian population.

Reports of widespread rights violations during Operation Brother's Keeper

Human rights organisations in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory have been documenting Israel's extensive military incursions in the West Bank as part of their action called Operation Brother's Keeper, beginning 12 June 2014, and the associated harm caused to Palestinian individuals and communities. These reports indicate that the current military

action being implemented to gain the safe return of the abducted Israeli teenagers – Eyal Yifrah, Naftali and Gil-Ad Shaar – is being conducted without full adherence to relevant human rights norms of international law.

Military incursions, mass arrests and house raids

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights reported on 21 June 2014 that the Israeli military had conducted more than 220 incursions into Palestinian towns, villages and refugee camps in the West Bank, and arrested at least 320 Palestinian civilians, including the Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and six of its members. The Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association report that ‘none of those arrested have been charged, in direct violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which provides that all those arrested should be informed of their charges upon arrest.’

B’Tselem reports there have been over 1,000 house raids and that, in some cases, the Israeli military has appeared to have also caused damage to property.

Fatalities and injuries to Palestinian civilians

Two Palestinian youths have been killed by the alleged firing of live ammunition by the Israeli military: 15 year old Mohammed Dudin from Dura, a minor, and 20 year old Ahmad Samada from Jalazoun. A third Palestinian civilian, 27 year old Ahmad Said Khalid from al-‘Ein Refugee Camp, was reportedly shot dead by the Israeli military at close range when on his way to a mosque for dawn prayers, because he did not obey orders to stop. His family reports that he suffered from mental health problems and epilepsy.

There have additionally been several reported injuries from military house raids and clashes according to corroborated reports from human rights organisations.

Severe movement restrictions

Severe movement restrictions have been imposed on Palestinian residents of Hebron, including preventing all Hebron residents under age 50 from leaving Israel via the Allenby border terminal and preventing entry to Israel for work. Gisha reports that the already severe restrictions on movement of persons and goods to and from Gaza have been intensified.

Administrative detention

B’Tselem reports that the Israeli Minister of Internal Security has been authorized to set guidelines for making prison conditions harsher and that family visits have been cancelled for all Palestinian prisoners. In addition, according to information published by Addameer on 19 June 2014, 77 Palestinians have been apprehended as administrative detainees since the start of Operation Brother’s Keeper.

LPHR has long had serious concerns over Israel’s normalised use of detention without charge or trial on the basis of secret information. Figures published by Addameer show that on 1 May 2014 there were 192 Palestinian administrative detainees in Israeli custody. This huge figure, which is significantly inflated since the commencement of Operation Brother’s Keeper, strongly suggests that Israel is utilising administrative detention as a matter of routine practice in breach of international law, rather than as a permissible exceptional

measure.

Urgent intervention required to protect the Palestinian population during Operation Brother's Keeper

The various extensive actions taken by the Israeli military as part of Operation Brother's Keeper raise serious concerns of disproportionate and unnecessary violations of basic rights of Palestinians under international law, including the right to life. Moreover, their cumulative effect appears to amount to the implementation of collective punishment against the Palestinian civilian population of the West Bank and Gaza, which is absolutely prohibited by international humanitarian law.

We therefore respectfully request the following steps are urgently undertaken by the British government:

1. Urge the Israeli government to fully adhere to their international legal obligations to respect the welfare and safety of the Palestinian population by ceasing action which violate basic rights and appears to amount to the implementation of collective punishment;
2. Urge the Israeli government to ensure that the Israeli military commence thorough, credible and transparent criminal investigations into the deaths and serious injuries caused to Palestinian civilians during the course of Operation Brother's Keeper, including: Mohammed Dudin, Ahmad Samada, and Ahmad Said Khalid;
3. Urge the Israeli government to immediately withdraw the reported harsher conditions imposed on Palestinian prisoners held in the West Bank and in Israel; and
4. Urge the Israeli government to release all administrative detainees or prosecute them in accordance with the standards of due process for the offences allegedly committed.

We look forward to your urgent intervention and for your written response.

Yours sincerely,

Tareq Shrourou
Director, Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights



Image: What are the principles of intervention? "We could not and did not turn a blind eye when

Gaddafi turned his forces against innocent civilians” said British foreign secretary William Hague, here in Benghazi, June 2011, where he travelled in order to offer judicious support to the Libyan rebels against Gaddafi. Photo by Ian Nicholson/AFP/Getty Images

[Human Rights Organizations: “Refrain from Collectively Punishing Palestinians.”](#)

*Media release from 11 human rights’ organisations
June 22, 2014*

Concern that many of the military’s actions in the Occupied Territories do not directly serve the aim of locating and returning the three abducted Israelis and are severely and unnecessarily violating basic human rights.



Image: IDF soldiers still on armed patrols/searches in Hebron, Thursday, June 19, 2014. Photo by Majdi Mohammed / AP

This morning, 22 June 2014, human rights organizations active in the Occupied Territories sent an urgent letter to the heads of the Israeli security establishment and military commanders in the West Bank, demanding that they refrain from collectively punishing the civilian Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as part of Operation Brother’s Keeper. The letter also demanded that the more stringent restrictions imposed on the detention conditions of Palestinian prisoners be withdrawn.

The letter – by the directors of Amnesty International, B’Tselem, Gisha, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, HaMoked: Center for the Defence of the Individual, Yesh Din, Adalah, Physicians for Human Rights – Israel, Rabbis for Human Rights and Breaking the Silence – was sent to the Minister of Defense and Minister of Public Security and made clear that the abductions constitute a violation of the fundamental principles of law and morals and must be condemned. The need to return the abducted Israelis safe and sound to their homes and families is clear. Yet, there is concern that many of the actions undertaken harm the Palestinian population and do not serve this purpose.

The large number of raids and arrests over the last week raises concerns that some of these operations are not the result of pressing operational needs. Overall, the measures adopted and their extent do not seem to serve a military need that can justify the damage they have caused. This is the case in terms of the military activity that has taken place in city centers as well as the sweeping and arbitrary travel restrictions. These actions have caused, and continue to cause, disproportionate harm to the basic rights of Palestinians, including the right to safety, health, freedom of movement and the right to earn a living.

Furthermore, the imposition of restrictive and punitive conditions on Palestinian prisoners solely because of their organizational affiliation is a blatant violation of the prohibition against collective punishment. Similarly, in terms of administrative detainees, it is hard not to question if there is really an immediate, essential military need that entailed the swift detention without trial of dozens of people.

The undersigned organizations emphasize that actions designed to intimidate and pressure the local population are illegal and untenable.

The following organizations signed the letter:

Amnesty International, B'Tselem,
Gisha - Legal Center for Freedom of Movement,
The Association for Civil Rights in Israel,
The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel,
HaMoked: Center for the Defence of the Individual,
Yesh Din, Adalah, Physicians for Human Rights - Israel,
Rabbis for Human Rights, Breaking the Silence.

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