



الهيئة الفلسطينية المستقلة لحقوق المواطن

The Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights

Date: 3 December 2007

November 2007 Report on Human Rights Violations

17 Citizens Killed due to Ongoing Vigilantism and Excessive Use of Force throughout PNA Controlled Territories

During November 2007, the **Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights (PICCR)** reported several human rights violations throughout the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) controlled territories, particularly incidents of excessive use of force by the Palestinian security forces. **PICCR** also monitored a number of violations against other human rights and freedoms, including the freedom of media, attacks on public institutions and property, personal security and arrests.

1. Violation of the right to life and physical safety:

Compared to October, incidents of violations of the right to life and physical safety sharply dropped during November throughout the PNA-controlled territories. **PICCR** reported that 17 citizens were killed during incidents of, excessive use of force and infighting throughout the PA-controlled territories. Of these, 5 citizens were killed in the West Bank and 12 in the Gaza Strip, in comparison, 31 citizens were killed in October.

Of the striking remarks about incidents reported by **PICCR**, almost half of those citizens killed were victims of the excessive use of force, particularly by firearms used by Police forces affiliated with the deposed Palestinian government in the Gaza Strip and PNA security personnel in the West Bank: 8 citizens were reported to be killed by firearms in these incidents, including 7 in the Gaza Strip and 1 in the West Bank.

On 12 November, Police forces of the deposed government opened fire towards a gathering of citizens in the Al Katibah Yard in the Gaza city during a festival commemorating the third anniversary of President Yasser Arafat's death. As a result, 6 citizens were killed and several others wounded. Of those injured, 1 citizen died two days later of bullet wounds sustained.

On 27 November, Palestinian security forces opened fire during dispersal a peaceful demonstration organised by activists of the Islamic Liberation Party in the city of Hebron

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in protest against the Annapolis Conference, killing 38-year-old **Hisham Na'im Yousef al Barad'i**, who sustained a fatal bullet wound in the chest.

Other killings happened for different reasons: 4 citizens were killed in incidents of arms chaos; 1 citizen under obscure circumstances; and 4 others during family fights and acts of revenge.

Among the victims were 2 children killed in the Gaza Strip. According to PICCR investigations, 16 citizens were killed by firearms or due to the detonation of explosive devices. The other citizen was beaten to death with sharp tools. Regarding to this, as a result of various incidents of infighting and security instability, over 167 citizens sustained various wounds in 20 separate incidents.

2. Violations against Freedom of Opinion and Expression:

Over the past month, several violations and aggressions were reported to have been committed against the freedom of opinion and expression in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Most prominently was the incident reported on 12 November, when the Police force of the deposed government killed 7 citizens and injured dozens others while they were taking part in a peaceful gathering. On 27 November, PNA security forces also oppressed a number of peaceful demonstrations which protested against the Annapolis Conference. Moreover, security forces beat and injured a number of journalists in an attempt to prevent them from covering these demonstrations. In the city of Ramallah, security personnel beat Wael ash Shuyoukhi, Al Jazeera Satellite Channel correspondent, with clubs, leaving him a broken left arm. Moreover, security personnel beat Mu'ammam 'Urabi, Director of Watan Television Station, while he was reporting a similar demonstration in the city.

Furthermore, several violations were committed against the freedom of the media:

- On 24 November, a group of armed individuals abducted Hafeth Ibrahim 'Asakreh, a news editor at Maan News Agency in the governorate of Bethlehem, while he was travelling to the News Agency. The armed individuals demanded that 'Asakreh reported 'false' news on behalf of superior officials in return for a certain amount of money to be paid to him. Once done, those individuals intrigued to deny such 'false' news as well as bring a lawsuit against Maan News Agency. 'Asakreh was abducted for a period of 12 hours.
- On 12 November, members of the Police forces of the deposed government beat Tamim Abu Mu'ammam, a correspondent at the Palestine Voice, leaving him with contusions and bone fractures.
- On 10 November, Police forces of the deposed government detained for several hours Sami Abu Salem, a press photographer at the Palestine News Agency "Wafa", while he was covering a students' vigil on the commemoration of President Yasser Arafat's death in the Gaza city.
- On 5 November, Palestinian Preventive Security personnel arrested Ala' Mohammed el-Titi, an independent journalist in the city of Hebron for

approximately 20 days, after which he was brought to justice and charged with incitement and fragmenting of the national unity. It should be mentioned that el-Titi used to work for the Hamas' Al Aqsa Satellite Channel. After its offices were sealed in the city of Ramallah, he worked as a freelance journalist.

- On 5 November 2007, Preventive Security Agency personnel arrested Usayd Abdul Majeed Amarneh in the city of Hebron, who used to work for the Hamas' Al Aqsa Satellite Channel. After its offices were closed in Ramallah, he worked independently. Having detained him for about 20 days, the Preventive Security Agency brought Amarneh to justice, charging him with incitement and fragmenting the national unity.
- On 6 November, Police forces of the deposed government raided a house belonging to Hisham Saqallah, Editor-in-Chief at the Electronic Media Monitor Pamphlet, confiscated his personal computer, cellular telephone, CDs, as well as some books, ostensibly because a complaint was filed against him. However, Saqallah never knew what the complaint was.
- On 12 November, Police officer beat Khaled Jamal Bulbul, while he was covering activities in the festival commemorating the third anniversary of Arafat's death in the Al Katibah Yard in the Gaza city. After the Police personnel opened fire, Bulbul went to the Mobilisation and Organisation Headquarters (the Offices of the Central Committee of the Fatah movement) in the vicinity of the Bureau of Personnel. Police officers raided the Headquarters, beat Bulbul, threw his camera on the ground, and stated that he should report to the Naval Police station to receive it.

3. Attacks on Institutions:

During the month of November, **PICCR** reported 11 attacks against public institutions and property as well as private property. The majority of these attacks took place in the Gaza Strip. Moreover, several patrols belonging to the Police forces of the deposed government were detonated by explosive devices.

On 20 November, unidentified individuals raided an office belonging to the Fatah movement in the city of Deir al Balah and damaged as well as stole its contents. Reasons behind the attack were not known.

On 21 November, unidentified individuals detonated an explosive device near a jeep belonging to the Police forces of the deposed government in the area of Al Faluja in Jabalya refugee camp, causing severe damage to the jeep. Also, causes of the attack were never known.

On 24 November, unidentified individuals set fire to the offices of a local community services association in Al Maghazi refugee camp, gravely damaging facilities of the association. Likewise, background of the attack was not known.

4. Attacks on personal security and arrests:

Over the past month, **PICCR** reported 10 incidents of abduction, all of which took place in the Gaza Strip. Most incidents of abduction were committed in the course of the conflict between Fatah and Hamas movements. In addition, the Police forces of the deposed government in the Gaza Strip and PNA security agencies in the West Bank continued to arrest citizens. In Gaza, Police forces arrested dozens of Fatah activists as well as former PNA security personnel in the aftermath of the 12 November incidents of the peaceful festival commemorating the death of President Arafat. Currently, scores of citizens are still being detained in stations and detention centres belonging to those Police forces on grounds of their political affiliation.

In the West Bank, PNA security forces also arrested over 50 Hamas activists due to their political affiliation. These, along with dozens others, are still detained.

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