



الهيئة الفلسطينية المستقلة لحقوق المواطن

The Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights

Date: 4 February 2008

## January 2008 Report on Human Rights Violations

### Sharp Drop in Human Rights Violations throughout PNA-Controlled Territory

Based on monitoring and documentation carried out by the **Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights (PICCR)**, human rights violations, particularly killing incidents, throughout the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) controlled territory sharply dropped over the month of January 2008.

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

Compared to the last year, especially January 2007, violations of the right to life and physical decreased markedly. Compared to 76 citizens in January 2007 and 21 in December 2007, **PICCR** reported that 12 citizens were killed in incidents of security chaos and internal instability over January 2008 throughout the PA-controlled territory.

Of these fatalities, 10 citizens were killed in the Gaza Strip and 2 in the West Bank. 5 citizens were killed in family fights and acts of revenge. As Police force affiliated with the Hamas' deposed government attempted to arrest a citizen convicted of killing another in a family fight in the city of Rafah, a Police officer was also killed. Moreover, 3 other citizens, including a Police officer and National Security officer, were killed under obscure circumstances. Additionally, 2 citizens were slain as a result of arms chaos, including a child after a citizen opened fire in a wedding party and a girl while she was playing with her father's pistol. During December 2007, a child was summoned to a Police station in the Gaza city. However, he was transported to hospital half an hour after he was subjected to interrogation. The child was diagnosed to have suffered from quadriplegia, due to which he was admitted to an Israeli hospital for intensified medical treatment. The Police forces claimed that he was injured when he attempt to escape from the detention centre. On 15 January, the child was reported to have died.

In addition, **PICCR** reported that 35 citizens were injured as a result of infighting and security instability. Most injuries were reported to have taken place in the Gaza Strip.

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**Ramallah**, Opposite PLC and Thalassaemia Centre, Tel. ٩٧٢ ٢ ٢٩٨٧٥٣٦ / ٢٩٦.٢٤١ / ٢٩٨٦٩٥٨, P.O. Box: 2264, Fax: ٢ ٢٩٨٧٢١١  
٩٧٢

**Gaza**: Ar Rimal, Opposite PLC, Tel: ٩٧٢ ٨ ٢٨٢٤٤٣٨ / ٢٨٣٦٦٣٢, Fax: ٩٧٢ ٨ ٢٨٤٥٠١٩

**Nablus**: Galiria Centre, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Telfax: ٩٧٢ ٩ ٢٣٣٥٦٦٨

**Bethlehem**: Al Mahd St., Nazzal Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> Flour, Telfax: ٩٧٢ ٢ ٢٧٥٠٥٤٩

**Hebron**: Ras al Jora, Hureizat Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Telfax: ٩٧٢ ٢ ٢٢٩٥٤٤٣

**Web Page:** [www.piccr.org](http://www.piccr.org)

**E-mail:** [piccr@piccr.org](mailto:piccr@piccr.org)

## **2. Violations against Freedom of Opinion and Expression:**

Over the past month, several violations and aggressions were committed against the freedom of opinion and expression throughout the Palestinian territory. On 10 January, Palestinian Police and security forces used force to disperse a civil, peaceful demonstration against the American President's visit to the Palestinian territory, leaving a number of protestors with injuries.

On 11 January, Police forces affiliated with the Hamas' deposed government dispersed a peaceful sit-in organised by employees at the Palestinian State Information Service in the Gaza city. On 10 January, dozens of armed individuals had raided the offices of the State Information Service and seized its contents.

In the West Bank, the Palestinian Military Intelligence agency also arrested 4 journalists in the governorate of Tulkarem, claiming that they worked for media agencies affiliated with the Hamas movement.

On 15 January, the Internal Security force at the Hamas' deposed government arrested Munir Abu Rizq, director of the *Al Hayat al Jadida* Newspaper in the Gaza Strip, due to his activities as a journalist. So far, Abu Rizq is still detained.

## **3. Attacks on public and private Institutions and property:**

During the month of January, PICCR reported that 5 attacks were committed against public and private institutions and property.

On 1 January, unidentified armed individuals on board a vehicle opened fire towards a house belonging to Fayyadh al Aghbar, representative member of the Hamas' Change and Reform Bloc on the Nablus Municipal Council, leaving his 35-year-old wife, Muna Abu Zahra, with light bullet wounds. Members of the Fatah movement carried out the attack in response to Police forces' practices against Fatah activists in the Gaza Strip.

On 10 January, dozens of armed individuals raided a 5-storey building housing the Palestinian State Information Service in the Ar Rimal neighbourhood in the Gaza city as well as confiscated 21 computers, 3 printers, 1 facsimile, 1 photocopying machines, 1 LCD monitor, 1 recorder and files.

## **4. Attacks on personal security and arrests:**

Over the past month, PICCR reported dozens of Hamas members and activists were detained by Palestinian security forces in the West Bank. In the Gaza Strip, Police forces affiliated with the Hamas *de facto* government also arrested activists from the Fatah movement. Scores of citizens are still being held in detention centres on political backgrounds in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

## **5. Attacks on Academic Freedom:**

Last month, PICCR monitored 2 major violations against academic freedom in the Gaza Strip. The American School in the city of Beit Lahiya was subject to 2 attacks: On 10 January, unidentified armed individuals fired a missile mortar towards and damaged the American School. On 12 January, a number of armed individuals also raided the school,

stole some of its contents, including computers, and set fire to 6 school buses that were parked at the school's parking lot.

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