

## Oral statement

### General Arab Women Federation

#### Special session on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

Thank you Mr President,

This is a joint statement by the General Arab Women Federation and Geneva International Centre for Justice

Mr President, the right to self-defense is enshrined in the United Nations Charter, yet two long-standing principles need to be respected: those of necessity and proportionality.

Operation Protective Edge violates these provisions on multiple levels. Contrary to official allegations, it was the Israeli PM's public calls for retribution after the murder of three Israeli teenagers in July that set off the avalanche of violence, and this is only the last in a series of aggressions. The campaign stands in serious violation of the UN Charter and must be considered as a clear act of aggression in direct violation of the United Nations Charter.

"Operation Protective Edge" further totally undermines all principles of proportionality. Despite international law provisions requiring the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, thousands of civilian homes have become military targets, with or without any proof of relation to military activity. Such acts amount to collective punishment and remain war crimes, even if bombings are carried out with previous warnings. The gravity of such violation is compounded when innocent civilians are injured.

As of today the Palestinian fatalities have risen to over 600, among them hundreds of civilians victims including over 120 children. Entire families have been extinguished; children on the beach killed, hospitals and fisher boats come under shelling, hence turning alleged self-defense into cold-blood murder. The indiscriminate brutality of Operation Protective Edge has become especially visible since the beginning of Israel's ground operation. In Shejaiya, one of Gaza's poorest and most crowded neighborhoods at least 100 civilians were killed in only one day. Ambulances that tried to rescue people came under fire and even a humanitarian ceasefire requested by the ICRC was rejected.

Mr President, the Israel policy against the Palestinians in Gaza violates the fundamental rules of international law and contravenes the basic customary moral standards. Such atrocities must be prosecuted as crimes against humanity. We call on this Council to strongly condemn the indiscriminate attacks against Palestinian civilians, demand an immediate cease fire without any delay, establish an urgent and independent commission of inquiry and ensure that all responsible will be brought to the International Criminal Court.

Thank you