**Israeli Open-Fire Orders Predictably Result in Bloodbath**

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As hundreds gathered Monday in Jerusalem to celebrate the move of the U.S. Embassy, about 100 kilometers away, Israeli forces fired on Palestinian demonstrators protected by the fence separating Israel from Gaza. They killed 60 people and injured well over 1,000 with live fire, according to Gaza’s Health Ministry.

Israeli forces have shot dead over 100 Palestinians in demonstrations in Gaza since March 30, including 14 children, and injured over 3,500 with live fire.

These staggering casualty levels are neither the result of justifiable force nor of isolated abuses; but foreseeable results of senior Israeli officials’ orders on the use of force.

Palestinian demonstrators in Gaza have challenged Israel’s half-century occupation. Sweeping Israeli restrictions on the movement of people and goods into and out of Gaza, exacerbated by Egypt’s sealed border on the south, have crippled the economy, fed a humanitarian crisis and snuffed out young people’s hope for a brighter future.

Israeli forces can use non-lethal means prevent unauthorized crossings of borders, but international law prohibits the deliberate use of lethal force in policing situations except when necessary to stave off an immediate threat to life.

Israeli officials have rejected the international law standard, saying they are justified in firing with live ammunition to prevent violent demonstrators from penetrating the border and attacking Israelis in nearby towns. They have ordered soldiers to fire on anyone who enters an expansive “no go” area inside Gaza, “instigates” demonstrations, or damages security infrastructure. These orders have effectively turned the “no-go” zone into a free-fire zone. Israel has not claimed that any soldiers or citizens have been seriously injured or killed during demonstrations.

Bloodshed on this scale results directly from these open-fire orders that green-light the firing on demonstrators irrespective of the threat they pose, along with Israel’s decades-long failure to hold accountable soldiers who violate their already lax open-fire orders. As criticism of this predictable bloodbath pours in from leaders around the world, the Trump administration is blaming Hamas alone, giving Israel a green light to continue killing and maiming.