**IADL condemns Israeli attacks on unarmed civilians in the Gaza Strip**

International Association of Democratic Lawyers

April 12, 2018

<http://iadllaw.org/2018/04/iadl-condemns-israeli-attacks-on-unarmed-civilians-in-the-gaza-strip/>

The International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL), a non-governmental organization founded in 1946, with members and member associations throughout the world, condemns in the strongest terms the Israeli actions beginning on March 30, 2018 – shooting, killing and wounding unarmed protesters who were demonstrating near the border fence in the Northern Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian protesters have massed on the border for the Great March of Return to commemorate Land Day. They intend to live in encampments and continue the protest until May 15, 2018, which is the 70th anniversary of the Nakba or “catastrophe” of 1948, when 800,000 Palestinians were forced to leave their lands to create Israel. They seek the right of return, which is enshrined in international law, most specifically General Assembly Resolution 194.

The killing and wounding of peaceful civilian protesters is a violation of basic human rights, including the right to life guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The use of lethal force by the Israeli Defense Forces violates the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement, which states, “intentional lethal use of firearms may only be made when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life.” There was no threat to the lives of Israeli soldiers posed by these protesters. Israeli leaders instructed the IDF to use live ammunition against the peaceful demonstrators.

The attacks also violated the principles of distinction and proportionality required by International Humanitarian Law, to ensure that civilians are not targeted with attacks. IADL asserts that Israeli leaders responsible for the deaths and injuries on March 30 should be prosecuted in the International Criminal Court.

Under the Fourth Geneva Convention, an occupying power has a legal duty to protect the occupied. Grave breaches of the convention constitute war crimes. They include willful killing; willfully causing great suffering or serious injury; intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population; and intentionally launching attacks with knowledge they will cause incidental loss of life or injury to civilians The Israeli Defense Forces committed all of these grave breaches on March 30 and are continuing to commit grave breaches.

IADL also condemns the veto the United States exercised to block the UN Security Council resolution that called for an independent investigation into these actions. We call upon the international community to denounce the actions of Israeli leaders that led to the events of March 30, which are ongoing, and urge an end to their impunity for these crimes. IADL also supports B’Tselem’s campaign called ‘Sorry Sir, I can’t shoot’ to tell soldiers they must refuse orders to open fire on unarmed demonstrators.

Issued April 11, 2018