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**Intentional targeting and murdering of Palestinian children by the Israeli
Occupation
Is a War Crime and Profound violation of the International Law**

Ramallah: Human Rights and Democracy Media Center- SHAMS, affirms that what is going on in the Gaza Strip is a war crime and a profound violation of International Law. Since the seventh of the current month, (October, 2023), the Israeli forces have been shelling and attacking the Gaza Strip from air, wild, and marine. The Gaza Strip is under arbitrary shelling that targets civilians, mainly children, directly. In addition to that, the Israeli forces are targeting private and public establishments such as hospitals and public facilities as well as the infrastructure, causing thousands of civilian deaths, including children. Moreover, the Israeli authorities banned the entry of medical and food supplies into the Gaza Strip as well as banning electricity, drinking water, and fuel. Such practices would, undoubtedly, cause a horrible human disaster in the Gaza Strip. Aged people, children, and sick persons are the most affected by the practices of occupation aggression and collective punishments. Likewise, the practices of the occupation are a clear violation of International law and International Humanitarian law; and they are a war crime that requires accountability and legal persuading of the perpetrators and ensure that they would not escape punishment.

The crimes of the Israeli occupation and the arbitrary targeting of civilians in the Gaza Strip, by the Israeli forces, are characterized as profound violations of the Geneva Fourth Convention and the second optional protocol annexed to the Geneva Conventions. These Conventions protect children under (international/non-international) armed conflicts as children are classified as civilians and among the groups that are not involved in military acts. Targeting children is classified as a war crime and a crime against humanity. Article 14 of the Geneva Fourth Convention states: "In a time of peace, the High Contracting Parties and, after the outbreak of hostilities, the Parties thereto, may establish in their own territory and, if the need arises, in occupied areas, hospital and safety zones and localities so organized as to protect from the effects of war, wounded, sick and aged persons,



children under fifteen, expectant mothers and mothers of children under seven". Additionally, the Israeli crimes violate Article 17 of the Same Convention, which states: "The Parties to the conflict shall endeavour to conclude local agreements for the removal from besieged or encircled areas, of wounded, sick, infirm, and aged persons, children and maternity cases, and for the passage of ministers of all religions, medical personnel and medical equipment on their way to such areas". Moreover, Article 24 of the same Convention, which states: "The Parties to the conflict shall take the necessary measures to ensure that children under fifteen, who are orphaned or are separated from their families as a result of the war, are not left to their own resources, and that their maintenance, the exercise of their religion and their education are facilitated in all circumstances. Their education shall, as far as possible, be entrusted to persons of a similar cultural tradition"¹, which is also violated by the Israeli occupation. On a related level, the United Nations Security Council identified 6 violations that children might be subject to, during armed conflicts where these violations include: murdering and deforming children as well as attacking schools and hospitals, and denying human aid to civilians during the war.

The Israeli crimes violate the United Nations Convention on Child Rights- 1989, which affirms protecting children and ensuring that they are not subject to risks as well as ensuring them decent life, care, and safety. Article 38 of the given Convention states: "1. States Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts which are relevant to the child. 2. States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of fifteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities. 3. States Parties shall refrain from recruiting any person who has not attained the age of fifteen years into their armed forces. In recruiting among those persons who have attained the age of fifteen years but who have not attained the age of eighteen years, States Parties shall endeavour to give priority to those who are oldest. 4. In accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect the civilian population in armed conflicts, States

¹ The Geneva Fourth Convention- 12/8/1948



Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure the protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict².

Targeting children by the hostile operations committed by the Israeli occupation against the Gaza Strip is a violation of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. As the State of Palestine has acceded to the ICC, then it is possible for individuals to lodge cases against the Israeli war criminals and file cases within the ICC. Likewise, the State of Palestine is allowed to lodge a case against the Occupations state for its crimes against the Palestinian children and for violating International Law.

The Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip would for sure lead to more and more victims of civilians. It means that the number of victims would keep increasing every other hour. On the twelfth day of the aggression, the number of killed, wounded, and displaced persons tolled an unprecedented number due to the Israeli attacks. On 19/10/2023 morning, the number of martyrs was 3,500 persons in addition to 12 thousand wounded persons (according to the records of the Palestinian Ministry of Health). The number is expected to increase every other minute. According to the governmental press office, the number of children killed till October 19, morning, was 1200 martyrs³.

Targeting Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip is a structured complete war crime that takes place in front of the world. The world is standing hands- cuffed watching the horrible situation in the Gaza Strip. Therefore, the international interested organizations should initiate immediately in pressing on the occupation's state to end its aggression against armless Palestinians and abide to the international law and the International Humanitarian Law.

Within the current circumstances in the Gaza Strip and the suffering of the civilians, mainly children, the Israeli violations of the International Law and the International Human Rights Law are clear. The practices and policies of the Israeli occupation state are crimes against international legitimacy and human values. The Israeli occupation state violates the ethics of the wild war and Hague Law as well as the

² Convention on the Child Rights.

³ <https://felesteen.news/post/1480establishments, including houses. 49/853>



Geneva Conventions. The Israeli practices are complete crimes against humanity and violate the hard rules of International law as Israel is proceeding in targeting the weak Palestinian social segments that include children, women, medical teams, hospitals, and also the civil establishments including the houses. In addition to that, the Israeli demands to evacuate hospitals and move out the sick persons and immature newly born babies, is a clear attempt to conduct collective killing of babies and ill persons and those with chronological diseases who receive treatment at these hospitals.