

## **UN Human Rights Office - OPT: alarm over killings and unlawful use of force by local police in Gaza amidst deteriorating public order**

**Ramallah – 4 April 2025**

The UN Human Rights Office is alarmed by the breakdown of public order in Gaza, with recent allegations of killings and unnecessary or disproportionate use of force in crowd control by local police. The siege of Gaza has now entered its second month as the humanitarian situation grows even more dire.

Israel's continued attacks on Gaza have served to dismantle and destroy Gaza's governance and law enforcement structures, contributing to a deterioration of public order that threatens the safety of Palestinians and their access to basic services and life-saving humanitarian aid. The situation is further exacerbated by Israel's complete closure of crossings into Gaza, preventing entry of any goods or essential supplies as families struggle to find the basic necessities such as food and water.

As vital aid becomes scarcer and people become more desperate, our Office has received reports of several incidents alleging the unnecessary or disproportionate use of force by local police against crowds seeking food. On 1 April, a Palestinian police officer allegedly discharged his firearm while attempting to control a crowd at a flour shop in Deir al Balah, killing a Palestinian man. Later, the family of the victim reportedly apprehended and killed the unarmed police officer in broad daylight. On 2 April, in a similar incident, local security personnel reportedly shot and killed a Palestinian man while managing aid distribution to a crowd at a warehouse in At Tuffah, Gaza City.

Of further concern are allegations of the arbitrary detention, torture and killing of a young Palestinian man, raising concerns of extrajudicial execution. On 28 March, armed Palestinian men reportedly took the victim from his shelter in Tal al Hawa in Gaza City, allegedly because of his participation in demonstrations criticizing Hamas and calling for an end to the war that took place in several locations in Gaza between 25 and 27 March. A few hours later, the family found him stripped, handcuffed, blindfolded, and beaten with a rope around his neck in front of a hospital in the neighbourhood. He succumbed to his injuries shortly afterwards. There are also reports that other individuals have been summoned by the local de facto authorities on account of their participation in the demonstrations.

Such killings and the use of excessive force in civilian crowd control and undue restrictions on the freedoms of peaceful assembly and expression, including arbitrary detention, ill-treatment and torture are unacceptable. While recognizing the challenges faced by the law enforcement system in Gaza, due to the systematic destruction by Israel, we remind any remaining de facto authorities including local law enforcement in Gaza of their obligation to comply with

international human rights law standards on the use of force, including in crowd control, and underscore the need for prompt and effective investigations into any allegation of unlawful killings and other violations of human rights law. We further urge Israel to immediately fulfil its obligations by taking all feasible steps to ensure public order and civil life in Gaza, in particular by respecting, protecting and ensuring the human rights of the population, including by immediately facilitating the entry of aid and assistance and refraining from attacking Gaza's justice and civilian law enforcement systems.

**ENDS**

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