



November 9, 2015

Neera Tanden

President

Center for American Progress

1333 H Street, NW, 10th Floor

Washington, D.C., 20005

Dear Neera,

As an admirer of yours and the Center for American Progress (CAP), I am wishing you all the best in moderating tomorrow's speech by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at CAP. Amnesty International spends a great deal of time, as you probably know, in addressing the human rights issues that arise in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We wanted to suggest the following questions to raise with the Prime Minister:

**1. Will Israel abolish its discriminatory judicial system in the Occupied Palestinian Territories?**

Under the current policy, Palestinian adults and children face trials in Israeli military courts, while Israeli settlers have the benefit of civilian courts. This is true even if Israeli settlers are facing similar charges as Palestinians.

**2. Why does Israel ban Palestinians from gathering in groups to discuss political matters without the permission of an Israeli military commander?**

Israeli Military Order 101 was issued by the Israeli army commander in the West Bank region in 1967 and has remained in force since then. Order 101 prohibits all gatherings of 10 or more persons "for a political purpose or for a matter that could be interpreted as political" or even "to discuss such a topic" unless they have received

authorization in advance under a permit issued by the Israeli military commander in the area. The penalty is up to 10 years' imprisonment and/or a hefty fine.<sup>i</sup>

**3. Why does Israel treat Palestinians accused of violent crimes differently than Israelis accused of violent crimes?**

For example, in violation of international law, Israel demolishes the homes of family members of Palestinians who are alleged to have committed violent crimes. Families of Israelis who are alleged to have committed violent crimes do not have their homes demolished.

**4. Why is Israel engaging in unlawful killings of Palestinian civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories?**

Amnesty International has recently documented in depth at least four incidents in which Palestinians were deliberately shot dead by Israeli forces when they posed no imminent threat to life, in what appear to have been extrajudicial executions. While Israeli forces and civilians have faced attacks and threats to their lives over the past weeks, Israel's investigation systems have long served to perpetuate impunity for unlawful killings of Palestinians by Israeli military and police forces.<sup>ii</sup>

The problem is not a new one. According to the UN, from 2011 to 2013, Israeli forces killed at least forty-one Palestinians in the West Bank and seriously injured at least 261 with live ammunition, including 67 children. During the same period of time, an astonishing 8,000 or more Palestinians were wounded in the West Bank by other means, including rubber-coated metal bullets and the reckless use of tear gas. Of these 8,000, at least 1,500 were children.<sup>iii</sup>

**5. Why does Israel continue to build settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, in violation of international law?**

According to figures collected by the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem, there are now over 547,000 Israeli settlers in the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.<sup>iv</sup> The Israeli policy of settling civilians in occupied territory amounts to a war crime under international humanitarian law (IHL). The Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits occupying powers from transferring their own civilians into territory they occupy.

These questions address key concerns about the Israeli government's discrimination against Palestinians, violations of Palestinian rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, and unlawful killings of Palestinians by Israeli security forces.

I hope you find them useful!

All my best,



Steven Hawkins

Executive Director

Amnesty International USA

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<sup>i</sup> Amnesty International, Trigger-happy Israel's use of excessive force in the West Bank, Page 9, February 2014 (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE15/002/2014/en/>).

<sup>ii</sup> Amnesty International, Israeli forces in Occupied Palestinian Territories must end pattern of unlawful killings, October 27, 2015 (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/10/israeli-forces-must-end-pattern-of-unlawful-killings-in-west-bank/>).

<sup>iii</sup> Amnesty International, Trigger-happy Israel's use of excessive force in the West Bank, Page 36, February 2014 (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE15/002/2014/en/>).

<sup>iv</sup> B'Tselem, Land Expropriation and Settlements, November 23, 2015, accessed November 6, 2015 (<http://www.btselem.org/settlements>).