Press document

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JOINT STATEMENT ON THE VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

The following joint statement was issued today by participants at the eleventh Annual Meeting of the Special Rapporteurs/representatives, independent experts and chairpersons of the working groups of the Special Procedures of the Commission on Human Rights and of the Advisory Services Programme:

"The Special Rapporteurs/Representatives, Independent Experts and Chairpersons of the Working Groups of the Special Procedures of the Commission on Human Rights and of the Advisory Services Programme, meeting in eleventh annual session in Geneva from 21 to 25 June 2004, express strong concern regarding continuous violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the occupied Palestinian territories despite grave concerns repeatedly expressed by the international community, including through Security Council Resolution 1544 of 19 May 2004. Such expressions of grave concern have been dealt with in numerous missions and statements by special procedures. This concern has been most recently expressed in numerous statements regarding the human rights violations taking place during the military incursion by the Israeli Defence Force in the Rafah refugee camp of the Gaza strip.

We deplore the practices of the Israeli authorities, including targeted killings, excessive use of force during military incursions, arbitrary and long periods of incommunicado detention, and torture and other forms of inhuman and degrading ill-treatment. Furthermore, we deeply regret the policy of demolition of Palestinian houses and destruction of civilian property, the massive confiscation and destruction of land, and restrictions on the freedom of movement, which violates, inter alia, the human rights to food, housing, water, health, education and work.

We also denounce the practice of "suicide bombings" carried out against the Israeli population.

Recalling previous recommendations from UN human rights mechanisms, we would urge the Security Council to authorize an international protection force in the occupied Palestinian territories to ensure that human rights violations cease.

We will continue to closely monitor the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, and report on violations, through joint action when necessary. We urge Israel to comply with its obligations under international law, and to fully cooperate with the United Nations protection and monitoring mechanisms, including during country visits by special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights."