



## INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION

### ISRAEL'S ATROCITIES IN GAZA: EXPLODING BULLETS, DENIAL OF MEDICAL CARE AND AMPUTATIONS



Palestinian cyclist Alaa al-Dali, 21, who underwent nine operations and had his leg amputated after being shot by an Israeli sniper

Since the Gaza protests began on 30 March, dozens of Palestinians have been left with long-term disabilities as result of the wounds caused by Israeli forces coupled with inadequate medical care.

After undergoing nine operations, al-Dali family members were told by doctors that the leg of the Palestinian cyclist Alaa al-Dali would have to be amputated due to damage to his bones and tissue.

On 30 March, al-Dali, along with thousands of others, headed to the eastern Gaza border fence to take part in the protests demanding their right of return, 70 years after the Palestinian Nakba (the catastrophe), when more than 750,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced from their towns and villages in the Palestinian territories in the wake of Israel's establishment in May 1948.

**ICSFT in special consultative status with the ECOSOC / Conseil oecuménique des Églises** 150, Route de Ferney 1211, Offices: 191&192, Geneva, Switzerland, Tel: +41227884808/ 5&6- Fax: + 41227884807  
Website: [www.icsft.net](http://www.icsft.net) - Email: [uncoordinator@icsft.net](mailto:uncoordinator@icsft.net) / [info@icsft.net](mailto:info@icsft.net)



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“I rode my bike to the eastern border fence along with three of my friends that day,” he recalled. “I was unarmed. I did not even have rocks. I just stood about 200 metres away from the border fence and got shot with a live bullet right under my knee.”

Al-Dali remembers arriving at the European Gaza Hospital and waiting five hours before being treated because of the scores of other wounded protesters. He fell unconscious after losing a lot of blood and was kept in the intensive care unit for two days before undergoing surgery.

## **Israel’s denial of exit permits to receive medical treatment**

According to Intisar, Alaa’s mother, when the family demanded his transfer to a West Bank hospital to have access to better medical treatment and avoid amputation, the Israeli authorities denied him permission to leave.

Israeli authorities have decided that any request for medical treatment of persons who took part in the protests would be denied. “Foreign residents have no vested right to enter Israeli territory, including Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip.”

Al-Dali’s 25-year-old brother Mohammed says there was a good chance doctors could have saved his brother’s leg if the necessary medical equipment and staff had been available.

Al-Dali believes that the Israeli authorities purposely denied him, and dozens of others, permission to leave as a form of punishment. “By denying me access to medical treatment, the occupation destroyed everything I have been building for years,” he lamented.

NGOs such as Physicians for Human Rights - Israel (PHRI) have slammed the Israeli government for denying numerous Palestinians' requests for exit permits to receive adequate treatment in the occupied West Bank for their wounds. Israel's denial of exit permits has been blamed for at least 43 Palestinians having limbs amputated because of lack of access to proper care.

## **Gaza hospitals completely overwhelmed**

Nearly 43 percent of essential medicines in Gaza are at zero stock and “essential life-saving medical equipment has stopped functioning due to the constant fluctuation in the current of electricity,” according to a [2017 report](#) by the World Health Organisation (WHO). As a result, Gaza hospitals have been struggling to cope with the mass influx of injuries over the past weeks.

Gaza has been suffering a humanitarian crisis as a result of the Israeli-imposed blockade on the Strip since [2007](#). Even the besieged enclave's hospitals are left by Israel with inadequate access to electricity and material shortages.



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The Israeli army's violent repression of the Great March of Return has only further strained health resources in Gaza.

## **Exploding bullets and amputations**

Al-Dali was shot by an "exploding bullet" – [prohibited](#) by international humanitarian law – which is designed to fragment and explode upon impact, causing the most damage possible. This makes it difficult to extract, forcing doctors to resort to amputation. These injuries require huge amounts of medical supplies and drugs to treat and leaves Gaza hospitals completely overwhelmed.

“To save my brother’s leg, doctors would have spent no less than ten hours performing a very complicated surgery to remove the [bullet’s] fragments. But there were dozens of other young men in need of urgent operations. Spending ten hours to save one person means leaving others to die,” he said.

According to [Medical Aid for Palestine](#), surgeons in Gaza have been forced to perform 17 amputations (13 legs and four arms) since 30 March.

Dozens of cases will suffer permanent disabilities, as Gaza’s main hospitals lack medical staff and equipment to treat hundreds of cases every day.

“You can imagine how hard it is for someone to be told that their leg was amputated,” al-Dali said. “The moment they told me that I lost my leg felt like a nightmare. I did not believe this would be a reality that I have to accept and deal with for the rest of my life.”

## **Israel's violent repression of the Great March of Return**

Israel is carrying out a [policy](#) of deliberately targeting protesters with live fire and using "[excessive and lethal force](#)". The Israeli rights groups B'Tselem even [launched a campaign](#) calling on Israeli soldiers to refuse orders to "open fire on unarmed protestors" in Gaza.

Israeli army forces have been stationed along the fence separating Gaza from Israel using tear gas, snipers firing live ammunition, tank shelling, and air strikes.

Israel’s use of exploding bullets reflects its intention to inflict the largest number of casualties among civilians. These ammunitions are used to cause maximum harm to Palestinian protesters that do not pose imminent threat to them.

These deliberate attempts to kill and maim are completely illegal. These cases amount to wilful killing, a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions and a war crime.

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At least 132 Palestinians have been killed and 14,800 wounded by Israeli forces since the protests began on 30 March, while dozens have been left with long-term disabilities.

The UN Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, [Jamie McGoldrick](#), who visited the Gaza Strip last week, [said](#) that the people of Gaza “can’t understand the silence of the international community” over the “suffering” they are enduring.

ICSFT condemns the completely illegal deliberate attempts of Israel to – often times using internationally prohibited exploding bullets – kill and maim Palestinian protesters, which constitute a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions and a war crime.

We also deplore the Israeli government for denying Palestinians' requests for exit permits to receive adequate treatment for their wounds in the occupied West Bank, leading dozens of Palestinians to long-term disabilities, including amputated limbs.

Finally, we call for a global arms embargo against Israel who keeps committing war crimes in the Gaza Strip in complete impunity, bombarding civilians that do not pose imminent threat to them- the most “threatening” act posed by the protestors is nothing but chant.