



Last update - 13:39 25/05/2005

MK wants urgent debate after Amnesty report condemning IDF conduct

By Haaretz Service and AP

Yahad (Meretz) lawmaker Zahava Gal-On on Wednesday called for an urgent Knesset debate following the publication of the annual Amnesty International report on human rights violations, which accuses Israel Defense Forces soldiers of war crimes, including unlawful killings, torture, destruction of property, obstruction of medical assistance and targeting of medical personnel.

The report says the IDF is responsible for the deaths of some 700 Palestinians, including 150 children, "most of them unlawfully."

Most of the deaths were caused by shooting, explosions, and aerial attacks on residential areas, according to the report.

Amnesty said that in the same period Palestinian terror organizations killed 109 Israelis, of which 67 were civilians, including eight children.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Mark Regev said the report seemed biased, although ministry officials had not yet read the entire document.

"This accusation of Israeli soldiers in the West Bank being involved in war crimes, that is something we reject," Regev said. "It would appear to be a very one-sided comment."

The report also stated that settlers have increased their attacks on Palestinians, harming trees and blocking the Palestinians from harvesting their crops.

Israel's ongoing construction of the West Bank barrier, "despite the [ruling](#) by the International Court of Justice," also comes under criticism in the report.

According to Amnesty, the work on the fence "continued to hinder or prevent Palestinians' access to their land, their workplaces and to education, health and other crucial services."

In a chapter devoted to the Palestinian Authority, the human rights group said security officials are involved in fighting between various militant groups, which killed dozens of Palestinians.

Eighteen Palestinians were killed in the clashes after they were suspected of collaboration with Israel.

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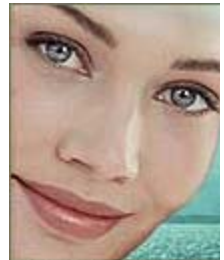
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750 prisoners are being held in Palestinian prisons, most of them haven't been given a trial and many of them are tortured and beaten in jail, according to Amnesty's findings.

Despite the negative report, Amnon Vidan, director-general of Amnesty International in Israel, said that the group feels encouraging progress has been made in protecting human rights in Israel and the territories.

The IDF Spokesperson and Foreign Ministry declined to respond to the report, Israel Radio reported.



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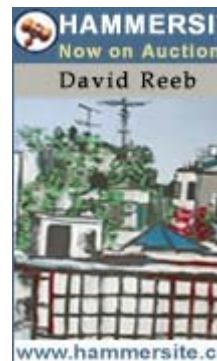
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