

Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights
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Oral statement submitted by Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, a non-governmental organization with special consultative status.

Israel's ongoing siege of Gaza

1. On Friday 9th March 2012 Israel carried out the extra-judicial killing of two Palestinians in Gaza, triggering retaliatory attacks from Gaza which were then used as justification to begin a series of air strikes against the besieged Palestinian population, killing at least 28 Palestinians and injuring at least 75 – including 17 children. This confirms that Israel fails to take sufficient precautions to avoid the loss of civilian life, as stated in paragraph 39 of the 2011 annual report by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.
2. Unfortunately, this attack like the countless others that have been committed, particularly since Israel imposed its blockade in 2007, are not isolated incidents of aggression; they represent Israel's ongoing strategy to debilitate and devastate the Palestinian population in Gaza.
3. These frequent attacks are an intensified effort to intimidate and traumatize the Palestinians living there, who are already suffering under the enduring strain of the blockade. As recognized in paragraph 37 of the 2011 annual report [*by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights*] the illegal and unilateral blockade imposed in June 2007 continues to "significantly impact the human rights situation in Gaza". The report rightly recognizes the effects of the severe restrictions on movement of people and goods, namely the increased poverty, unemployment, the decline in infrastructure and quality of healthcare, education, water, and sanitation services. It must also be remembered that over 50% of Gaza's population are children, completely unable to provide for themselves, are witness to violence and destruction resulting in trauma and further who are being deprived of their basic needs such as education.
4. Both the 2011 annual report and the 2009 UN Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (The Goldstone Report) recognized Israel's impunity in carrying out these acts, but by failing to hold Israel to account, these reports seem to have had the opposite effect of ensuring Israel that, *despite* these findings, it can continue in its destruction of Gaza.
5. **We therefore urge the Human Rights Council to draw urgent attention to Israel's continued impunity and its ongoing aggression against Gaza.**