

From *The Palestinian Association for Human Rights (Witness) A non-profit independent human rights organization based in Beirut, Lebanon*

To *Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances*

OHCHR-UNOG, 8-14 Avenue de la Paix, 1211 Geneve 10, Switzerland

Subject *Memorandum on Enforced Disappearances of Detainees from Gaza*

Dear Esteemed Members of the Working Group,

Greetings,

We are writing to you from the Palestinian Association for Human Rights (Witness) to address the disturbing incidents of detention and enforced disappearances of thousands of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

The incidents of arbitrary detention and involuntary disappearances of Palestinians from all across the Gaza Strip are numerous and mostly undocumented. The prolonged military land invasion, displacement, and disrupted communications warn of further increasing allegations that will begin to unfold. We refer, as an example, to the following incidents:

Video footage, photographs, and media reports showcased the mass detention of civilians from the Gaza Strip who were subjected to degrading methods of detention.

In early December, images of naked, blindfolded, and handicapped men, including elderly and minors, photographed in humiliating positions, were made public. These men were then

transported to unknown detention locations. Among the detained were recognized medical personnel, academics, and journalists.

During the IDF raid on Kamal Adwam Hospital in Beit Lahya, approximately 1,000-1,200 internally displaced persons (IDPs), medical staff, and patients were transferred to an unknown destination, mainly males between 16 and 65 years old. Similar scenes were reported in Beit Lahya Elementary Boys' School.

National civil society actors warned that the Israeli authorities had developed secret detention centers to handle detainees from the Gaza Strip. The detention of civilians extended to humanitarian workers, including members of the Palestinian Red Crescent and WHO (later released).

Israeli media reports also indicated multiple deaths among detainees from Gaza in the Bier Al Saba military air base. On the 18th of December, the Israeli government introduced amendments to the Incarceration of 'Unlawful Combatants' Law, which extended the allowed detention period up to 45 days before a detention order.

The Palestinian Association for Human Rights (Witness) calls for urgent measures by the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to address these violations and urges the international community to take action to ensure the protection of basic human rights and respect for international law.

April 8th 2024, Beirut, Lebanon

The Palestinian Association for Human Rights (Witness)

