



Forum: CCPCJ

Issue: Addressing the misuse of weapons against unarmed civilians in Palestine

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Introduction

The misuse of weapons, whether it may be intentional or unintentional, against unarmed civilians in Palestine remains a critical concern in contemporary global human rights discourse. This is a multifaceted issue which arises from several long-term ongoing conflicts in the region that are marked by disproportionate use of violence and violations of international humanitarian law. The many reports of such violence imposed by Israeli soldiers against innocent Palestinian civilians highlight the urgent need for accountability and adherence to ethical standards especially within conflict zones.

To address this issue, several actions must be taken to explore the legal frameworks established by international conventions including, but not limited to; the Geneva Conventions. There must also be an examination of the political, social, and historical factors that play a pivotal role in the persistence of such abuses. By understanding these root causes, the international community can work towards a meaningful solution that prioritizes the protection of human rights and the promotion of long-term peace in the region.

Definition of Key Terms

Humanitarian Law

Legal frameworks imposed to govern the conduct of war and protect civilians during armed conflict.

Geneva Conventions

International treaties which establish humanitarian laws and standards for humanitarian treatment during conflict to protect civilians.

Disproportionate Force

Having unequal military power between two parties in a conflict zone.

Occupation

The control of one state over a territory's population and government

Civilian Casualties

The non-combatant deaths or injuries resulting from military activities.

Armed Conflict

The organized use of armed force between groups or states.

Background Information

Brief History of the Occupation

Israel's occupation of Palestine is a complicated and intricate issue rooted in a long and contentious history. In the late 19th and early 20th century, Jewish nationalists -also referred to as Zionists- sought to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine, which had been under the Ottoman Empire during that time. Following the first world war, Great Britain gained control of this territory and issued the Balfour Declaration of 1917, where Palestine was to become a homeland for the Jewish population. This declaration, coupled with an increase in Jewish immigrants, led to growing tensions with the Arab Palestinian population, who had been inhabiting the land for centuries.

In 1947, the UN proposed a partition plan to divide Palestine into two separate states: one Jewish state and one Arab Islamic/Christian state. However, Arab leaders completely rejected this plan as it was deemed unfair and ridiculous. After the fall of the British mandate in 1948, Israel declared its independence, triggering a war with neighbouring Arab states. Israel ended up victorious, leading to the displacement of thousands of Palestinians who were forced to flee their homes.

Since 1948, the conflict has continued and recently worsened, with several wars, genocides, and uprisings. In 1967 Israel occupied the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza strip. Furthermore, the Israeli Occupation has been a major source of tension and conflict in the Middle East, with current and ongoing disputed over settlements, security, and the right of return for hundreds and thousands of Palestinian refugees.

The misuse of weapons

Many reports from several human rights organizations indicate numerous instances whereby weapons were purposefully misused against innocent Palestinian civilians. Such instances include, but are not limited to: the use of live ammunition, rubber-coated bullets, tear gas, and bombs. Additionally, there have been allegations of the use of excessive force during raids and arrests, in addition to weapons that have indiscriminate effects, such as white phosphorus in densely populated areas. The misuse of weapons against innocent Palestinian civilians majorly stem from intentional attacks made by Israeli militants who are never held accountable for such heinous acts. Thus, the international community must come together to implement accountability on their parts and ensure that such intentional misuse of weapons is not imposed upon any civilian in the Middle East.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

United States of America

The US, aside from being one of the largest weapon producers in the world, is a major arms supplier and one of the biggest supporters of Israel's occupation of Palestine. The US plays a significant role in this issue because it has been called upon several times to use its leverage to ensure that its weapons are not used in a way to violate international law.

The European Union

Numerous nations in the European Union also play a pivotal role in this issue, as they are significant economic and political actors in the Middle East. Countries such as Spain and Ireland have consistently shown their support for innocent Palestinian civilians by providing them with fundamental humanitarian aid and engaging in diplomatic efforts to promote peace.

The Arab League

Every single country in the Arab league, whether it may be in the Middle East or North African region, has played a significant role in addressing this issue. Countries such as Egypt, Jordan, and Syria have been historically deeply involved in this occupation. The majority of these countries have openly condemned Israel's misuse of weapons against innocent Palestinians, and further provided diplomatic and financial support to Palestinian citizens.

The United Nations

The United Nations has constructed various bodies in order to combat issues revolving around the misuse of weapons, as well as the Palestine-Israel conflict as a whole. Additionally, they play a significant role in monitoring and reporting human rights violations that occur in Palestinian territories.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- **The Geneva Conventions of 1949**

The Geneva Conventions, along with their additional protocols, form the basis of the International Humanitarian Laws. These protocols set out rules for the treatment of innocent civilians affected by armed conflict, as well as those who are prisoners of war, and those wounded sick during such conflicts.

- **The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907**

Similar to the Geneva Conventions, the Hague Conventions are also a significant part of the international Humanitarian Laws. They also set out rules to ensure the safety of innocent civilians in armed conflicts, while also implementing strict legislation regarding the banishment of certain types of weapons and tactics.

- **Arms Trade Treaty (67/234B)**

The arms trade treaty, or ATT, is a multilateral treaty regulating the international trade in conventional arms. These arms range from small weaponry to combat aircrafts, battle tanks, warships, and many more. The ATT also includes specific provisions that are relevant to the issue of the misuse of weapons against Palestinian civilians, such as

requiring states to justify their needs to use or implement any sort of weaponry even during armed conflict.

- **Firearms Protocol, 31 May 2001 (55/255)**

This protocol calls for the complete abolition of the manufacture and production of illicit firearms on a global level. This treaty calls for governments to implement strict regulations regarding licit arms and arms flows to prevent their diversion into an illegal circuit.

Possible Solutions

Strengthening Legal Frameworks and Accountability

This would involve reinforcing adherence to international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL). It emphasizes thorough investigations into alleged violations, prosecutions of perpetrators, and ensuring access to justice for victims. This approach would provide a very clear and strict legal framework which ensures that any group or individual violating these laws will face severe and appropriate punishment. However, enforcing international laws is quite challenging, especially when there is a lack of political will and access to such conflict zones. Nonetheless, implementing new and stricter frameworks is key to ensuring that humanitarian laws are not violated and that sanctions are imposed upon nations who do violate them.

Arms Embargos and Restrictions

Imposing stricter controls through embargos and restrictions on arms transfers is also a potential solution for this issue, especially if restrictions are specifically made against military groups such as Israel's IDF as a punishment for violating international humanitarian laws. This could be an extremely efficient solution as it would directly limit the availability of weapons that can be misused. Furthermore, it also sends out a strong political message which would exert pressure on political parties to take more caution when it comes to using such weapons. A major limitation when it comes to this potential solution is the fact that it is overly dependent on the comprehensive implementation of such embargos. This is because it can be quite easy for nations with more political power to find ways around such restrictions and still manage to gain access to these weapons.

Promoting Conflict Resolution and Addressing Root Causes

This solution is primarily focused on addressing the underlying causes behind the conflict as a whole in an attempt to foster resolution and peace-making in the region; because this would automatically solve the issue of the misuse of weapons against civilians. By finding a solution for this occupation as a whole, both parties can benefit in the long-term without the need for armed conflict. However, this would be extremely difficult, especially considering the multiple attempts made in the past to solve the issue. Conflict resolution can be a complex and lengthy issue to solve, and it requires political will from each party involved.

Guiding Questions

1. What role has your delegation played in providing either financial or humanitarian aid to Palestinian civilians?
2. What innovative approaches or strategies could be explored to enhance civilian protection and prevent the misuse of weapons in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
3. How can international actors, such as the UN, the US, and the EU, exert greater leverage to prevent the misuse of weapons against civilians and promote respect for human rights and international law?
4. What are the obstacles to achieving a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians, and how can addressing the misuse of weapons against civilians contribute to the peace process?
5. How do narratives and public discourse surrounding the conflict influence perceptions of the use of force and the protection of civilians?

Appendix

- I. [International Humanitarian Law Database](#)
- II. [The Arms Trade Treaty](#)
- III. <https://www.thesimonsfoundation.ca/disarmament-education>
- IV. <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/peace-and-security>

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