

Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights and Al-Haq

Field Report:

**Violations Against Civil Society Organizations and Trade and Popular Unions
Between 11 and 20 June 2007 in the Gaza Strip and West Bank**

Introduction

The Palestinian civil society organizations have played a distinguished role in the Palestinian society in the Occupied Palestinian Territory since the time of the Ottoman regime in Palestine. Palestine is unique in that civil society organisations predate the establishing of the national government, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). The work of civil society in Palestine forms a natural response to occupation, its policies and destructive impact on society. Civil society provides assistance to the Palestinian people, including relief work in the agricultural, health and social fields, sponsored voluntary activities and working on political detention issues including defending victims. Moreover, it exposed the serious violation of international humanitarian and human rights law by the Israeli occupation. Following the creation of the PNA, the number of civil society and charitable organizations operating in Palestine increased and played an important role during the second *intifada*. During this time, civil society organisations played a monitoring role and/or supplemented the work of official institutions. They have been fast in reaching victims and providing relief services, as well as providing treatment to the wounded. At the same time, civil society continued its work in advocating for the victims of human rights violations, and reviving Palestinian popular heritage.

Recently, the continued deterioration of internal security and escalation of the conflict for power between Fateh and Hamas led to a wide-spread and comprehensive attack, launched by the Al-Qassam Brigades [the military wing of Hamas], against the offices of the security forces belonging to the PNA, and institutions affiliated or closely related to Fateh, in the Gaza Strip. The attacks began on Tuesday 12 June 2007 at 11:20am when the Al-Qassam Brigades besieged the headquarters of the first and second brigades of the National Security forces, previously the offices of the [Israeli] civil administration, in the east of Jabalia camp. The attacks ended in the evening of Thursday 14 June 2007 with Hamas taking control of the positions and headquarters of the security forces and the President's office.

During and after the confrontations, the offices of civil society organisations, popular and trade unions and some women's organisations working in Gaza Strip were targeted. The damages ranged from looting of furniture and other assets, including papers and official documents and burning the organisation's premises, through to taking control of the organisations and attempting to impose new criteria on their work.

These actions not only took place in the Gaza Strip but rapidly extended to the West Bank. Members of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades [an armed group affiliated to Fateh] and Fateh activists attacked civil society organisations and offices belonging to Hamas, close to it, or supervised by people close to Hamas, resulting in damage to these organizations and their assets.

Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights and Al-Haq jointly produced this report monitoring the recent violations against civil society organisations in the Palestinian Territory. One of the messages of this joint report is the re-affirmation of the historical and political unity of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in a response to the growing political divide and at a time when the Israeli occupation is imposing geographical separation. Here, it is worth noting that the report only highlights violations against the offices of civil society organisations, popular unions, trade unions and women's and political organisations. In the report Al-Mezan Center and Al-Haq do not address violations committed against dozens of governmental institutions, including ministries, courthouses and headquarters of security, police and national security forces. The report highlights the violations to which civil society organisations have been subjected regardless of the perpetrators. Both Al-Haq and Al-Mezan condemn all forms of attack against civil society organisations, in all cases, as unjustified acts that deprive Palestinians of the services offered to them by these organisations.

Brief overview of developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Confrontations and clashes [between Fateh and Hamas] began to escalate [in the Gaza Strip] on 7 June 2007 in the Rafah Governorate, and moved to Gaza city on Sunday 10 June. In Rafah, the house of Jamal Abu Al-Jidyan, General-Secretary of Fateh in the Jabalia area, was besieged and he and his brother were killed in the evening of Monday 11 June 2007. The morning of Tuesday 12 June 2007 saw armed confrontations starting with the besieging two locations, in northern Gaza, belonging to two national security brigades, followed by the besieging the headquarters of the General Intelligence in the Al-Sudaniyeh area, the main headquarters of the Preventive Security Forces and the headquarters of the security apparatuses in all Gaza Strip areas. Raiding and taking control of the main offices of the Preventive Security Forces in Tal Al-Hawa by the Al-Qassam Brigades, together with the Executive Force [a security force established by Hamas after its victory in the legislative elections], was the beginning of the collapse and surrender of all other security posts in the Gaza Strip, including the office of President Abbas.

During the confrontations and in the aftermath, civil society organisations in the Gaza strip and the West Bank have been subjected to systematic assaults. These assaults were different in nature and motivation from other assaults directed against private homes and residential apartments, estimated to be in the hundreds. Targeting civil society organisations was intentional and systematic for reasons relating to the activities of the targeted organisations, and the political affiliation of its employees and administration, whom those committing the assaults believed to be in conflict with. This report will set forth the affected organisations by governorate and date the event described occurred:

Gaza Strip

North Gaza Governorate

1. On Monday 11 June 2007 at 22:40 at night, Hamas armed forces raided the offices of the Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Fateh) located opposite the Beit Lahia Municipality, near Beit Lahia police station. The armed forces of Hamas destroyed the furniture and contents of the Fateh offices and completely burnt it. Moreover, civil defence vehicles were unable to reach the scene, resulting in the burning all the office contents, including the two computers, a number of office desks and cabinets, dozens of chairs, office tools and stationery. No casualties occurred.
2. On Tuesday 12 June 2007 at 22:00, Hamas armed forces raided the Fateh offices in the Jabalia Camp market and confiscated all the office contents including a computer, a number of office desks and cabinets, dozens of chairs, office tools and stationery. The offices are still closed.
3. On Tuesday 12 June 2007 at 22:30 at night, armed men raided Watan Cultural and Social Center, known for its affiliation to Fateh, located opposite to the Jabalia Camp police station and confiscated all its assets including three computer sets, a number of office desks and cabinets, dozens of chairs, office tools and stationery. They also broke its windows. The Center is still closed at the time of writing.
4. On Wednesday 13 June 2007 at 22:00, armed men raided the offices of the Beituna Society for Community Growth and Development, located in the Al-Tawam area west of Jabalia. No damage was caused. It is worth noting that the wife of Brigadier-General Rashid Abu Shbak, the ex-director of the General Security Forces, heads the board of the society. Sources have reported that contact was made with the society's board members asking them to re-open and re-activate the society after a number of changes were made and procedures put in place, including

following up on the society's affairs, and the presence of a number of Executive Force members inside and at the door of the society, so as to guard it. A number of the society's employees have resumed their work.

5. On Wednesday 13 June 2007 at 22:00, armed men raided the offices of the Life and Hope Society, located near Abu Rashed pool in Jabalia Camp, and confiscated all its assets including a computer set, a number of office desks and cabinets, dozens of chairs, office tools and stationery. The society is still closed at the time of writing.
6. On Wednesday 13 June 2007 at around 23:30, dozens armed men from Hamas raided the building of the General Federation of the Palestinian Workers, located in the Al-Siftawi neighbourhood of the North Gaza Governorate, confiscating some of its property and completely taking control of the building. Most of the contents of the offices were left undamaged. A group of the Executive Force were positioned in the building to guard it. Field research found that the building has been closed since the beginning the confrontations. It is worth noting that the building comprises four floors and houses the general administration of the federation, the offices of the trade unions and the offices of the Sawt Al-Omal (Voice of the Workers) radio station which, at the time of writing, has not broadcast since the raid.
7. On Thursday 14 June 2007 at around 23:00, armed men raided the offices of the Youth House for Culture and Arts, located opposite the offices of the Jabalia Al-Nazlah Municipality, and confiscated some of its property including a computer set, a number of office desks and cabinets, dozens of chairs, office tools and stationery. It is worth noting that the offices have been previously assaulted twice for unknown reasons.
8. On Wednesday 13 June 2007 at around 22:0, armed men raided the offices of the Life and Hope Society, located in the area opposite to the offices of the Jabalia Al-Nazlah Municipality in Jabalia Al-Baher, and confiscated some of its property, including a computer set, a number of office desks and cabinets, dozens of chairs, office tools and stationery.

Gaza Governorate

9. On Wednesday 13 June 2007 at around 18:30, a number of mortars hit the building of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society in Tal Al-Hawa during confrontations between the armed members of Hamas and members of the Preventive Security Forces, which broke out after Hamas attacked the Preventive Security Forces headquarters. The mortars partially damaged building.
10. On Thursday 14 June 2007 at around 14:00, unknown armed men raided the Rosary School and attached convent after they firing a rocket at main gate of the school. The armed men destroyed some of the property, including furniture, office desks and beds, and stole some computer sets, cameras and a projector. They then burned a part of the two storey building, and destroyed crosses and other Christian religious symbols.
11. On Thursday 14 June 2007 at around 14:00, unknown armed men raided the Al-Quds Hospital belonging to the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, located in Tal Al-Hawa near the Preventive Security Forces headquarters. The armed men tampered with its property and stole some equipment.

12. On Wednesday 13 June 2007 at around 9:00, armed men from Hamas raided the offices of Al-Ahli Club, located in the Al-Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood of Gaza City, and took control of the club. The club is still closed at the time of writing.
13. On Thursday 14 June 2007 at around 14:00, armed men from Hamas raided the Al-Shata Cultural Center, located behind Al-Quds Open University north of Al-Shata Camp, occupied the Center, and transformed it into an Executive Force post.
14. On Thursday 14 June 2007 at around 15:00, armed men from Hamas raided the offices of the Services Club in Al-Shata Camp, and transformed it into an Executive Force post.
15. On Friday 15 June 2007 at around 9:00, armed men from Hamas raided the offices of the Kinaan Institute for Educational Development, located on Al-Shuhada Street in the al-Rimal neighbourhood of Gaza City, searched the offices and tampered with its property.
16. On the morning of Friday 15 June 2007, armed men identifying themselves as members of the Executive Force raided the Hanadi Tower which houses the Palestinian Media Centre located near the Fishers' Port west of Gaza. They broke down the director's office door, and confiscated property. The confiscated property included, according to available information, four computer sets, a photocopying machine, a central printer, two faxes and two telephone devices. They also seized equipment that was stored inside the director's office, including four faxes, a central printer, two central telephones with eight lines each, and a refrigerator, TV set, gas oven and all the kitchen appliances. Moreover, the armed men seized all the books, documents and papers from the office as well as its furniture, including four office desks, two meeting tables, 20 meeting chairs and four office chairs. The Executive Force members present in the tower prevented the subsequent inspection of the organization's office. It is worth noting that the tower includes the apartment of the UNRWA General Commissioner.
17. On the morning of Friday 15 June 2007, armed men raided the offices of the German organisation Fredrick Ebert Stiftung, housed on the third floor of Taybah building located near the Fishers' Port west of Gaza City, and searched it. No loss of office property was reported.
18. On the morning of Friday 15 June 2007, armed men raided the offices of the German organisation GTZ (German Agency for Technical Cooperation), housed on the first floor of the Taybah building located near the Fishers' Port west of Gaza City, and searched it. No loss of office property was reported.
19. On Friday 15 June 2007 at 2:00, unknown armed men raided the offices of the Palestinian Journalists Association, located opposite the Al-Shawa and Husary Towers. The field researchers could not enter the offices because the entrance was closed with chains. There are suspicions that the armed men have tampered with office property and seized files and documents.
20. On Thursday 14 June 2007 at around 15:00, unknown armed men raided the premises of the Prisoners and Ex-prisoners Association, located south of the Government House, and tampered with its property. The field researchers could not enter the offices because the entrance was closed with chains. There are suspicions that the armed men have tampered with office property and seized files and
21. On Thursday 14 June 2007 at around 16:00, armed men from Hamas raided the offices of the General Union of Palestinian Women, located opposite Al-Azhar University in Gaza City. The

field researchers could not enter the offices because the entrance was closed with chains and there was no one available to speak with.

22. On Thursday 14 June 2007 at around 16:30, armed men from Hamas raided the offices of the Al-Ata society in Gaza, located near the Fishers' Port west of Gaza City, and tampered with its property.
23. On Friday 16 June 2007, the offices of the European Union were subjected to a robbery attempt. The would-be robbers left without being able to steal anything. The attempted robbery was discovered when the employees maintaining the EU premises noticed signs indicating attempts to dismantle the water cisterns and other property. The EU offices are located on Charles De Gaulle Street in Gaza city.
24. On Friday 16 June 2007, armed men raided the offices of the Aman Coalition for Integrity and Accountability and the offices of the Al-Aqsa University Friends Association, both housed in the same building. The armed men searched and tampered with the papers and property of the two offices. They also stole the computer sets and the electric generator from the Al-Aqsa Association, returning them after they had inspected the computers' contents.
25. On Thursday 21 June 2007 at 12:00, armed men from Hamas raided the offices of the Palestinian Commission for the Protection of Refugees' Rights and forced the director and employees to exit the premises and hand over the keys. The raid coincided with the presence of a Canadian delegation and a number of external trainers. It is worth noting that the armed men behaved threateningly, and showed no willingness to discuss, or even give reasons, for their actions. In the evening of the same day, after continuous contacts and negotiations, the armed men returned the keys.

Deir Al-Balah Governorate

26. On Friday 16 June 2007 at around 10:40, a number of armed men from Hamas, including masked men, raided the Deir Al-Balah Society for Disabled Rehabilitation, located in the Deir Al-Balah refugee camp. The armed men ordered the chairman of the society to hand over the keys and started a precise search of all the offices and rooms in the four storey building. The armed men had left the building by the next morning, and the employees returned to work. At the same time, the offices of Voice of the Will Radio station, which belongs to the same Society and housed on the third floor of the building was raided. The armed men forced the workers out of their offices when they refused to broadcast media information at the request of the armed men, who then broadcast Hamas chants and anthems. It is worth noting that Voice of the Will Radio is non-partisan, and focuses on those with disabilities in the Palestinian Territory. The armed men continued broadcasting Hamas chants and anthems until 21:30 the same day. Broadcasting then stopped and the armed men left in the morning of the next day.

Khan Younis Governorate

27. On Tuesday 12 June at around 3:00, unknown armed men raided the offices of the Sharek for Youth Forum, located in the Al-Muhata area of Khan Younis, and set fire to the two-storey building. Moreover, the armed men prevented civil defence vehicles, which had arrived at the scene from extinguishing the blaze. It is worth noting that the Sharek offices are located in a building belonging to the Khan Younis Municipality, and the building is run by Sharek for Youth Forum under a partnership agreement signed with the municipality.

28. On Tuesday 12 June at around 11:00, armed men from Hamas raided the Khan Younis Governorate building, which overlooks Salah Eddin Road near Bani Suheila intersection. After several hours, they left after tampering with its assets.
29. On Thursday 14 June 2007 at around 16:00 in the evening, armed men from Hamas raided the offices of Fateh in Abasan Al-Jadida, confiscated some of the assets of the offices and then left. Later on the confiscated assets were returned to the offices, according to available information.
30. Between 13 and 15 June 2007, the building of the Science and Technology College, located in Qizan Al-Najar near the Intelligence Forces offices south of Khan Younis city, was damaged by the confrontations that took place in that area. The surrounding buildings' roofs were used by armed men from Fateh and the security forces. The damage included broken windows. Moreover, a grenade hit the roof of the college building. After the confrontations ended, it was found that ten computer had been stolen from one of the college labs.
31. On Thursday 14 June 2007, after Hamas took hold of the offices of the security forces in Khan Younis, the offices of the Martyrs Foundation, located on Jalal Street near the security forces compound in the city, was raided and people tampered with its furniture and equipment, and stole some of its assets.
32. On Thursday 14 June 2007, the Future Kids Forum located in Qizan Al-Najar area near Science and Technology College building was robbed, including the contents of the two-storey building. The items stolen included furniture, labs' sets and other equipment. It is worth noting that the robbery took place after Hamas members took control of the offices of the security forces located nearby.
33. In the evening to Friday 15 June 2007, the offices of the Al-Ahliyah Society for Social Union, located in the Al-Hawuz area of Khan Younis city, was raided by armed men from Hamas. The armed men searched and tampered with the assets of the society's offices and confiscated a computer set.
34. On Monday 18 June 2007 at 16:00, masked armed men raided the offices of the Engineering Careers Association, housed in the Shbair building, located on the street linking Jamal Abdel Naser Street and Al-Sikka Street in Khan Younis, and tampered with its assets, destroying some of them.
35. On Sunday 17 June 2007, Hamas members took control of the Khan Younis Services Club, a sport, cultural and social club, located in Khan Younis city. The Hamas members forced the administration to hand over all the items required for running the club and appointed members of Hamas to the administration of the club.

Rafah Governorate

36. On Friday 15 June 2007 at around 14:15, armed men from the Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, raided the offices of the Association of Women Committees for Social Work, the Fateh framework for women in Rafah, located on Abu Baker Al-Sidik Street opposite to the Khawla School in Rafah city, and confiscated the office contents, including files and equipment in addition to destroying its four doors. According to available information, the armed men confiscated a computer set, printer, a 28" TV, video pkayer and a receiver, in addition to CDs and documents including information of the Association's work. The armed men also attempted

to seize the contents of the kindergarten and nursery run by the Association after the Association members attempted to move these fearing that they would be stolen. This failed and a list of the property that was removed from the kindergarten and nursery was handed over to the armed men.

37. On Thursday 14 June 2007 at around 20:00, armed men from Hamas raided the Fateh office in Abu Yousef Al-Najart. The office is housed in a residential building on Ottman Bin Affan Street in Rafah city. The armed men confiscated the computer sets and documents before they set the office on fire.
38. On Thursday 14 June 2007 at around 20:00, armed men from Hamas raided the office of the Petrochemicals and Gas Trade Union after breaking into the building housing the union, located in Zu'rub Building on Ithman Bin Affan Street. Al-Mezan Center got no confirmed information whether the armed men tampered with the office assets or not. Information confirmed that the entrance to the office and doors inside were broken. Meanwhile, the people in charge of the association affirmed that no documents were lost.
39. On Thursday 14 June 2007 at around 20:00, armed men from Hamas raided the office of Al-Wissam Foundation for Wounded Care after breaking the entry way to the office, housed in Zu'rub Tower on Othman Bin Affan Street in Rafah city. Three computer sets and documents were confiscated.
40. On Sunday 17 June 2007 at 13:00, armed men from Hamas confiscated the furniture and computer sets of the Fateh Military Forum, housed in the Abu Gharara Building on Omar Bin Al-Khatab Street in Rafah city. This happened while the forum's employees were removing these assets.
41. On Thursday 14 June 2007 at around 19:30, armed men from Hamas raided the offices of the Tal Al-Sultan Neighbourhood Development Committee, located near Tal Al-Sultan Hospital in Rafah city. The armed men took control of the offices of the Committee and moved some of its assets to an unknown place. On the next day, the armed men who took control of the offices seized all the remaining assets and removed them. It is worth noting that the external walls of the offices were painted so as to conceal the name of the Development Committee, which was replaced with Badr Center for Recitation of Koran. Mediators informed the board members, who are from Fateh, of their intention to add one Hamas member to the neighbourhood committee, knowing that the board includes members of Hamas and independents. The reply was that adding a member requires a board meeting to decide on the matter. After thorough efforts made by the National and Islamic Forces Committee, seven members of the neighbourhood committee board took control of the offices, in the presence of the National and Islamic Forces Committee representative. That was on Wednesday 20 June 2007. The offices' furniture was destroyed and some of the assets were lost. Hamas denied stealing the assets, and it was decided to follow up on the issue and so as to restore the stolen items.

The West Bank

Ramallah Governorate

42. On 10 June 2007, a number of attempts were made to set fire to the new offices of the Al-Khansa Society in Ramallah city. Meanwhile, the old premises of the same society was set on fire.

43. On 11 June 2007, unknown persons broke the glass of the meeting room window in the new offices of Al-Khansa Society and threw a burning bottle inside. The incident was controlled and no damage was reported.

Nablus Governorate

44. On Friday 15 June 2007, members of Fateh raided the Al-Awda Center for Refugees Affairs, located in the Rafidia neighbourhood of Nablus city, and destroyed all its property. It is worth noting that the persons in charge of the centre are close to Hamas.

45. On Friday 15 June 2007, members of Fateh raided the offices of the Palestinian Center for Democracy, Research and Studies, located on Rafidia Street in Nablus city, destroyed the office contents, and stole all the electrical equipment, including the computer sets, printers and faxes. The in-kind losses of the center are estimated at 15 thousand Jordanian Dinars according to the Center owner Raed Nia'rat, as reported by the head of the Political Science division at An-Najah University.

46. On Friday 15 June 2007, armed members of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the armed wing of Fateh, set fire to the Huwara Charitable Society, located on the main street of Huwara town. This society is close to Hamas.

47. On Friday 15 June 2007, a group of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades broke the windows of the Islamic School, located in the Rafidia neighbourhood of Nablus city near the Arab Specialist Hospital, damaged school property, and transformed it into a detention centre for kidnapped Hamas members.

48. On Saturday 16 June 2007, a group of Fateh members set fire to the offices of the Development and Prosperity Society in Nablus city, resulting in the burning of, and other damage to, the society's assets.

49. On Saturday 16 June 2007, unknown persons set fire to the offices of the Al-Iman Forum, located near Nablus city's main traffic circle. All the material goods of the offices including its furniture were set afire.

50. On Saturday 16 June 2007, unknown persons set fire to the offices of the Al-Nour Center in Nablus city. All the office contents were set afire.

51. On Saturday 16 June 2007, unknown persons raided the offices of the Islamic Association in Nablus city, and destroyed the contents of the office.

52. On Saturday 16 June 2007, unknown persons set fire to the offices of the Nafha Prisoners' Society, located in the Rafidia neighbourhood of Nablus city. This Society is under the supervision of Hamas. All the office contents were set afire.

53. On Saturday 16 June 2007, unknown persons raided the offices of the Koran Academy in Nablus city and destroyed all its assets.

Jenin Governorate

54. On Wednesday 13 June 2007 after midnight, unknown persons set fire to the offices of the Islamic Club in Jenin city, completely burning the offices.

55. On Wednesday 13 June 2007, unknown persons belonging to Fateh raided the building of the Al-Iman School, located in Al-Basatin in Jenin city, raised Fateh flags on the roof of the building, tampered with the contents of the office, and damaged some of the office furniture and the computer sets. On Thursday 14 June 2007 at dawn a fire broke out on the first floor of the school building and burnt all the assets including the computer sets, office furniture, school files and archives. It is worth noting that the school belongs to the Al-Zakat [Islamic alms giving] Committee of Jenin city. On the same day, a group of armed Fateh members besieged Al-Razi hospital in Jenin city and opened fire in the hospital surroundings. The armed Fateh members also threatened the hospital administration with the closure of the hospital, but they neither raided the hospital nor tampered with its property.
56. On Thursday 14 June 2007, the offices of the Al-Furqan Cultural Center, based in Silet Al-Harthiyah town, were fired upon by masked armed men. No casualties took place and no damage to the building occurred.
57. On Friday 15 June 2007, armed men raided the Al-Razi Hospital belonging to the Al-Zakat Committee, and damaged the contents of the hospital, especially the emergency room equipment. The armed men threatened to close the hospital.
58. On Tuesday 19 June, the Suna' Al-Hayat Center in Qabatia town, Jenin Governorate, was fired upon. Then armed Fateh members raided the offices of the centre and destroyed a large part of the contents of the office, such as the computer sets and the office furniture.

Tulkarem Governorate

59. On Thursday 14 June 2007 at dawn, armed men set fire to two buses belonging to the Al-Isra School of the Al-Zakat Committee in Tulkarem.
60. On Friday 15 June 2007, armed Fateh members opened fire on the front of the Al-Zakat Hospital in Tulkarem, located near the municipality park, resulting in damage to a number of the hospital windows. On the same day, the village council of Iktaba village was fired upon by armed Fateh members, but no damage or casualties were sustained. Also on the same day, armed Fateh members set fire to the offices of the Al-Ifaf Charitable Society, based in Tulkarem city near the municipality park, damaging the contents of the office.
61. On Sunday June 2007, armed Fateh members opened fire on the Al-Zakat Hospital belonging to Al-Zakat Committee, located in the southern neighbourhood of Tulkarem city, resulting in the breaking of the windows, and replaced the hospital sign with a billboard carrying the name "Martyr Samih Al-Madhoun".
62. On Tuesday 19 June, a number of armed Fateh members raided the offices of the Al-Zakat Committee based in Anabta town, east of Tulkarem city. These armed men also raided the offices of the Dar Al-Koran Al-Karim and a medical clinic belonging to the Al-Zakat Committee, damaging the furniture and property of the clinic, including medical tools, apparatuses and equipment, in addition to stealing three computer sets and several files from the above mentioned institutions.

Salfit Governorate

63. On Thursday 14 June 2007, unknown persons raided the offices of the Al-Nahdah Society for Orphans in Bidia village and damaged its property.
64. On Friday 15 June 2007, unknown persons raided the Al-Isra Cultural Center, located on the Interior [ministry] Street in Salfit city, and stole some of the contents of the office, in particular the computer sets, and damaged the rest of the property.
65. On Friday 15 June 2007, the offices of the Scientific Medical Society in Bidia village was raided, which resulted in damaging its assets.

Qalqilia Governorate

66. On Friday 15 June 2007, armed men raided the offices of the Islamic Club located in Qalqilia city and destroyed its assets. It is worth noting that this Club has been closed for two years by an order issued by the Israeli Occupation Forces.
67. On Friday June 2007, armed men raided the Al-Amal Society for Orphans' Care and stole all the contents of the office.

Bethlehem Governorate

68. On Thursday 14 June 2007, a number of Fateh members student at Al-Quds Open University damaged the billboard of the Islamic [political] bloc at the university.

Tobas Governorate

69. On Tuesday 19 June 2007, a number of students belonging to Fateh raided the offices of the Islamic Bloc at Al-Quds Open University in Tubas city, damaging some of its assets and burning the files.

Conclusion

Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights and Al-Haq express our strong condemnation of all assaults that target civil society organisations, popular and trade unions' offices, and political factions offices mentioned in this report. We also re-affirm that targeting civil society organisations forms a serious violation of a constitutional right ensured by Article 26 of the Revised Palestinian Basic Law. This Article asserts the right of the Palestinian people to participate in public life, particularly in creating and shaping trade unions, societies, associations, unions, links, clubs and grassroots organisations.

Moreover, targeting civil society organisations violates Article 1 of the Charitable and Civil Society Organizations Law No. 1 of 2000, which states that, "Palestinians have the right to exercise social, cultural, professional or scientific activities freely, including the right to form and facilitate civil societies, in accordance with the provisions of this law."

Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights and Al-Haq also denounce the destruction, confiscation and looting to which the above mentioned organisations have been subjected. The majority of these organisations provide services to the community, and the contents of their possessions and assets are part of the Palestinian people's possessions and assets, and they cannot be infringed under any pretext or justification.

Accordingly, Al-Mezan and Al-Haq demand that the Palestinian National Authority and Hamas, being a de facto authority in Gaza Strip, abide by the following:

1. Stop taking control of all the organisations and offices of trade and popular unions, and immediately evacuate them of armed men to allow the employees and boards to resume their work freely in accordance with the law.
2. Return all documents, equipment and electrical apparatuses confiscated or stolen from the organisations and unions' offices, which were raided, handing them over to the concerned parties with an official record of the fact.
3. Start the rehabilitation of the damaged offices and buildings of these organisations.
4. Assess the damage to the furniture and content of the offices of these organisations, unions and popular unions, assess the value of these damages, and pay compensation for the damage sustained, or replace them with alternatives of the same specifications.

Al-Haq and Al-Mezan assert that compensation for damage and loss, and punishing those proved to be involved in the attacks against civil society organisations, is important as a first step to prevent the repetition of such acts, and at the same time prevent the political parties and individuals from involving civil society organisations in the ongoing conflict.

Al-Haq and Al-Mezan also affirm that the continuation of the current situation seriously threatens the national rights of the Palestinian people. We also warn against disregarding the legal tools to hold accountable those proved to be facilitating criminals avoiding justice as it will establish patterns of crimes that might be repeatedly committed.