Press Briefing Note on Burundi, Israel / Occupied Palestinian Territory, Cuba and High Commissioner Speeches

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http://www.ohchr.org/SP/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16883&LangID=

**(1) Burundi**

The High Commissioner is  deeply alarmed by the latest developments in Burundi’s unfolding crisis.

On Friday, dozens of people died in attacks against several military camps in Bujumbura and the heavy fighting that followed. Security forces later on carried out intensive house searches in the Musaga and Nyakabiga neighbourhoods, where they arrested hundreds of young men, allegedly summarily executing a number of them and taking many others to unknown locations.

With this latest series of bloody events, the country seems to have taken a new step towards outright civil war and tensions are now at bursting point in Bujumbura.

The High Commissioner  urges all actors in the current crisis, including political leaders and State authorities at the highest level, to take every step possible to stop this deadly escalation and engage in a meaningful and inclusive dialogue.

More than ever before, there is an urgent need for decisive action from the international community to stop this senseless violence. We cannot turn our backs on the people of Burundi at this turning point of their history.

**(2) Israel / Occupied Palestinian Territory**
We continue to be gravely concerned at the unrelenting violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel. Since the current escalation started at the beginning of October, 21 Israelis and 117 Palestinians have lost their lives (along with two foreign nationals), with thousands more injured.

Although international attention on the crisis has waned, the level of killings, injuries and arrests has continued, with on average one person dying every day.

The unacceptable wave of stabbings, shootings and car rammings continues to kill and injure Israelis.

The response from Israeli security forces has resulted in alleged attackers, protesters and even bystanders being killed and injured. We again voice deep concern over reports of excessive use of force by Israeli forces.

In the H2 area of Hebron alone, we have seen 16 alleged attacks against Israelis since 1 October. Of the 17 Palestinians involved in such incidents, 16 have been shot dead and one injured and arrested.

All instances of the use of force resulting in death or injury by law enforcement officers should be the subject of prompt, independent and impartial investigations.

Punitive demolitions of Palestinian houses and the withholding of bodies of alleged attackers from their families can only aggravate this situation. We call on both Israeli and Palestinian leaders to act decisively to de-escalate the situation.

**(3) Cuba**

The High Commissioner has just issued a press release on Cuba, expressing his concern at the extremely high number of arbitrary arrests and short-term detention of individuals, including human rights defenders and dissidents in Cuba in recent weeks. The press release can be viewed on [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16882&LangID=E](https://mail.hrvoices.org/OWA/redir.aspx?SURL=CNELHDZpc03ebnQvQzYVK9fyYEcUzy6aQGzqm2ny52dqJYDJqgXTCGgAdAB0AHAAOgAvAC8AdwB3AHcALgBvAGgAYwBoAHIALgBvAHIAZwAvAA..&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.ohchr.org%2f).

**(4)** **High Commissioner speeches**
The High Commissioner has just delivered a wide-ranging speech to members and observers of the Human Rights Council this morning, briefing them in particular on his travels this year to the Central African Republic, Mexico, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Brazil and the Republic of Korea, where he opened an office to work on the human rights situation in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

In his speech, High Commissioner Zeid takes stock of some of the key human rights challenges of the day, including climate change, intolerance, and a number of protracted armed conflicts as well as a number of States teetering on the edge of an abyss, with the smallest trigger potentially resulting in a disastrous outbreak of mass human rights abuse and violations. The High Commissioner also acknowledges important progress in the enjoyment of human rights over the past year, including the abolition of the death penalty in Mongolia as well as the very welcome exercise of the right to political participation for women in Saudi Arabia, where 20 women have just won seats in the country’s municipal councils.