

## Vienna based human rights organization 'Friends of Humanity' details Israeli destruction of 27 mosques in Gaza

### The bombing of mosques in Gaza was for Israel a first-strike-initiative

Source: Friends of Humanity International

VIENNA, Austria January 20, (FOH)— Israel has deliberately bombed houses of worship in Gaza Strip with rockets and heavy bombs, on those of worshipers in some cases, under the Israeli comprehensive war against Gaza Strip.



Masjid At-Tawhid, Gaza City, Jan. 20

### The Names and the Locations of Demolished Mosques

In the following statistics we document the names and the locations of 27 mosques that have been destroyed by the Israeli occupation forces since the starting of the war against Gaza on the 27th of December 2008.

- I. The Masjid of the Martyr Imad Aqel in Jabaliya camp for Palestinian refugees in north Gaza, the bombing of the mosque by the Israeli warplanes on Dec. 28, 2008 resulted in the collapse of an adjacent house, causing the death of 5 sisters from



one family and injuries of number of citizens who are living nearby.

- II. Masjid Al-Saraya was completely destroyed on Dec. 28, 2008 through the air bombing of Al-Saraya governmental compound in the center of Gaza city.

- III. The Israeli warplanes have targeted Masjid Al-Abbas and the neighboring Al-Abbas police station in Gaza city on Dec. 28, 2008 that resulted in substantial damage.

- IV. Masjid Al-Shifaa Mosque was bombed by air Dec. 28, 2008, inside the mosque were a lot of a relatives of ill persons and four of them were killed. The mosque is located near Al-Shifaa medical complex in Gaza city. The bombing created a state of confusion among the medical staff and teams who are working in the hospital, deepening the difficulties in the hospital after being subjected to significant damage by fragments of missiles and pieces of stones and cement. Israeli missiles turned the mosque to a pile of rubble. The two rockets that directly struck the dome of the mosque resulted in two large holes,

the stones and the columns of the mosque scattered and spread out in adjacent roads, houses, and shops causing a lot of damage.

- V. Masjid Abu Bakr Al-Sideeq is located in Beit Hanoun town in the far north of Gaza Strip, the Israeli warplanes have fired several missiles towards the mosque on Dec. 29, 2008 causing complete destruction. The dead and injured had been recovered from under the rubble.



**Masjid Al\_Fadilah, Rafah, Palestine, Jan. 11, 2009. (AP Photo/Khaled Omar)**

- VI. On Dec. 29, 2008 the Israeli warplanes bombed Masjid Ezz Al-Dien Al-Qassam martyr mosque in Abasan / Khan-Younis in south of Gaza Strip destroying it completely. The Israeli authorities did not mention any reason for this bombing.
- VII. On Dec. 29, 2008: Bombing of Masjid Al-Ribat in Rafah resulted in seven 7 dead 3 of them are children.
- VIII. Masjid Al-Abrar” in Rafah was bombed on Dec. 29, 2009 and again on Jan. 15, 2009. The mosque has been completely destroyed.
- IX. On Dec. 29, 2008 the Israeli warplanes have bombed Masjid Riad Al-Saaliheen mosque in the north of the Gaza Strip.
- X. Around 3:00 AM at Tuesday, Dec. 30, 2008, at dawn, the occupation warplanes bombed Masjid Al-Faruq Omar bin Al-Khatib in Al-Brej camp in the center of Gaza Strip destroying it completely.
- XI. Masjid Abu Hanifa Nu'man located in Tal Alhawa south of Gaza city, was targeted with four missiles on Dec. 31, 2008, resulting in destroying it completely, the injuries of five women, and damage in a large number of adjacent houses.
- XII. On Jan. 1, 2009 the occupation forces fired a rocket that caused damage to Masjid Khalil Al-Rahman in the Abasan area east of Khan Younis.
- XIII. On Jan. 1, 2009 an Israeli bombing has targeted Masjid Al-Nasr, an ancient mosque in Beit Hanoun town in the north of Gaza Strip resulting in its destruction. The mosque was built in A.D. 736.
- XIV. On Jan. 2, 2009 the Israeli warplanes targeted Masjid Al-Khulafa' Al-Rashideen” in Jabaliya camp for Palestinian refugees in the north of Gaza Strip, the Israeli forces fired several rockets towards the mosque and destroyed it, and resulted in injuring several Palestinians and damage in several neighboring houses.

XV. On Jan. 2, 2009 the Israeli forces bombed Masjid Omar Bin Abdel Aziz in Beit Hanoun resulting in enormous damage in its buildings.

XVI. On Jan. 2, 2009 the Israeli jet warplanes

type F-16

bombed the

mosque of the

Martyr

Ibrahim Al-

Maqadmah in

Beit Lahia

town far north

of Gaza with a

large bomb

weighting 500

kg when tens of worshiper were performing the prayers, resulting in a massacre with 16 people killed and dozens injured.



XVII. The Israeli warplanes at the dawn on Jan. 6, 2009 bombed Masjid Hasan Al-Banna in Al-Zaitoon neighborhood north of Gaza Strip resulting in destroying it completely. The bombing resulted in the injuries of several persons and the burning of a number of neighboring houses.

XVIII. At 9:00 PM on Jan. 7, 2009 Israeli warplanes bombed Masjid Al-Taqwa in Al-Shiekh Radwan neighborhood north of Gaza city, and re-bombed it four hours later, resulting in the killing of 4 Palestinian civilians, the injuries of others, and resulted in the destruction of the mosque that was composed of four floors and the damage of about 10 neighboring houses.

XIX. About 11:50 AM on Jan. 7, 2009 Israeli warplanes bombed Masjid Al-

Noor Al-Mohammed located in AL-Jala' street in Gaza city, causing complete destruction to the mosque, killing and injuring several Palestinians, and in damage to neighboring houses.

XX. On Jan. 7, 2009 at about 2:00 A.M., the Israeli warplanes bombed the police center in Bani Saheela east of Khan-Younis, resulting in destroying it and damage in the

neighboring buildings including Masjid Hamza, with no injuries.

XXI. On Jan. 8, 2009 the Israeli forces fired artillery shells towards the houses of the citizens and Masjid Ibad Al-Rahman in Wadi Al-Salqa village.

XXII. Occupation forces destroyed Masjid Al-Ribat in Khan-Younis on Jan. 9, 2009.

XXIII. On Jan. 10, 2009 Israeli warplanes bombed Masjid Al-Ssafa in Al-Brej camp resulting in partial destruction.

XXIV. On Jan. 11, 2009 at 3:00 AM, the Israeli warplanes of type F16 have bombed with many missiles "Dar Al-Fadeela" mosque that follows the house of virtue orphans which includes elementary private school, the college of Dar Al-Da'wa for human sciences, and a computer center. That is located in Taha Hussein street in Khirbit Al-Adas neighborhood north-east of Rafah.

This causes the complete destruction of the house Dar Al-Fadeela.

XXV. Masjid Bilal bin Rabah in Rafah south of Gaza was destroyed completely in the first week of the war against Gaza, the photos of the destruction of this mosque were displayed in a lot of media around the globe.

XXVI. Masjid Al-Salateen in Jabaliya was targeted by a bombing on Jan. 14, 2009.

XXVII. On Dec. 28, 2008 Masjid Al-Estiqamah in Rafah city was significantly damaged as a result of bombing in adjacent areas by Israeli warplanes. The mosque is located in a densely populated residential area causing the damage in tens of neighboring houses.

It is regrettable that a lot of other mosques have also been badly affected but with less degree, during the bombing of neighboring houses and civilian institutions by Israeli occupation forces.

Also the demolishing of many of places of prayer those are located inside the buildings of ministries, associations, sports clubs, civilian police centers, and other civilian institutions that the Israeli forces had bombed and destroyed.

### **The Roles of Mosques in Gaza**

The mosques in Islamic religion are characterized with high sanctity, and are considered as houses of God since they are places of worship for Muslims, and can be affected and its role can not be undermined in any case. The Muslims are racing to contribute in building and maintaining

mosques. The Muslims consider any one who is preventing the praying in mosques is performing a deep injustice and oppression towards them and their religion. Thus anyone can imagine the level of anger caused for Muslims as a result of bombing, demolishing and destroying of mosques by the Israeli occupation forces in addition to the killing of worshippers in many cases during prayer.

The mosques have contributed in special roles in Gaza Strip under the occupation and the siege against the people, especially in social welfare field and the distribution of relief materials.

The mosques have formed important places for the people of Gaza to meet, announcing about their social occasions and holding these occasions in mosques, reconciliation and solving social problems is done in mosques also.

In addition to the religious education that is performed in mosques, the school students are also receiving strengthening courses in different regular school subjects.

The mosques of Gaza Strip are located in densely populated areas, and people are rushing to rent houses or to build them beside mosques.

### **Israeli Occupation and Mosques Violations**

The leadership of the occupation forces has performed prior publicity against the mosques in Gaza Strip a prelude to its destruction. They claimed that the mosques are strongholds for the members of the Palestinian resistance, but the inspection of the resulting effects caused by mosques destruction and the witnesses are all



confirming that the claims of the Israeli authorities are totally false and unfounded.

The violation and profanation of these rogue forces against mosques in Gaza Strip is considered as clear indicator that the Israeli occupation consider itself above all international humanitarian laws and conventions and do not obey them as a result of the infinite and unlimited support it receives from USA and some countries from the Europe Union.

We mention here news containing a declaration from the Israeli army on Jan. 11, 2009 regarding the bombing of mosques in Gaza Strip: The Israeli spokeswoman Avital Leibovich declared on Monday, that the government has demanded the army to eliminate and destroy the infrastructure of Hamas movement that the movement was able to build during the last two years.

Leibovich said, during the third phase of the military operation in Gaza strip the Israeli army will target hundreds of ammunition and explosives stores and Grad rockets that are hidden in mosques and other places, pointing that the Israeli army will enter a new stage in which it will continue the achieving of the major goals, and reaching stable and safe condition for the state of Israel.

The Israeli warplanes did not hesitate in bombing the places of worship with heavy bombs claiming that members from Palestinian resistance are hiding in the mosques with their weapons, but none of those resistance members was killed after

the bombing of the mosques, but the achieved goals were demolishing the mosques and killing the innocent citizens who hide in the mosques believing that they are safe shelters.

### **The Organization Position Regarding the Demolishing of Mosques by the Occupation**

“Friends of Humanity” condemns the Israeli attacks against the civilians, houses of worship, and the civilian places through bombing them by artillery shells and missiles from warplanes. And considers the targeting of mosques and other civilian places from the occupation forces as dangerous indicator and huge violation for the sanctity of mosques, places of worship, and civilian institutions. It is not strange to the occupation forces who are committing war crimes against the Palestinian people on daily basis, by using its warplanes and heavy weapons to target children, women, elderly, and safe houses in its war against the Palestinians.

What the occupation is doing today is fully compatible with what his militia has done in the Palestinian territories inside the green line in the forties of the last century when it has demolished thousands of mosques and places of worship, and such operations are very similar to the acts of the rogue Serbian militia during its war against the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the nineties of the last century and the demolishing of houses of worship there.

The crimes of mosques demolishing are not approved by any legislation or any religion or any law, and the places of worship must be avoided. The demolishing of mosques in

**The leadership of the occupation forces has performed prior publicity against the mosques in Gaza Strip a prelude to its destruction. They claimed that the mosques are strongholds for the members of the Palestinian resistance, but the inspection of the resulting effects caused by mosques destruction and the witnesses are all confirming that the claims of the Israeli authorities are totally false and unfounded.**

Gaza represents evidence and proof for the non-validity of the occupation claims that the occupation is respecting the freedom of religion and worship.

Israel is bearing the complete responsibility for the Palestinian civilians in all conditions and situations, according to the rules of the international law that the presence of an armed resistance do not justify in any way the usage of that excessive force.

The organization warns from the killing and injuring of more victims from the Palestinian civilians and the additional targeting of houses of worship and other civilian places according to the Israeli threats issued from the highest political and military levels in the Israeli government in expanding the military operations against Gaza residents and the expansion in targeting the houses of worship.

### **The demands of the Friends of Humanity**

Friends of Humanity International views the Israeli military operations against the civilians and civilian institutions in Gaza Strip with a greatly concern:

- I. Stress on the necessity for the cease of bombing and demolishing houses of worship, and considers the claims of the occupation leadership regarding the existence of members from the Palestinian resistance inside the mosques to be flimsy, since who are resorting to mosques are the women, children and the elderly as a result of bombing of their houses.
- II. The organization calls for the protection of mosques, houses of worship and sanctities. And the necessity for supporting the Palestinian people and standing

beside him in its confrontation against the occupation aggression, and emphasizes on the right of the Palestinian people in exercising their natural right of worship.

- III. Stress that these deliberate crimes are war crimes resulted from the Israeli war against the occupied Palestinian territories reflects contempt of those forces to lives of Palestinian civilians and their holy places, considering it as reprisal operations and unjust punishment against the Palestinians contradicting with the article number 33 in the 4th Geneva Convention of 1949 regarding the protection of civilian persons during the wars.
- IV. Call all peoples of living consciences to do effective and hard work aiming to stop these crimes. And renew its demands to the contracting parties to the 4th Geneva Convention to fulfill their obligations contained in the first article in the convention in which they are committed to respect the convention in all cases, also respecting the obligations in the article 146 of the convention by the prosecution of the defendants accused of committing big breaches in the convention, noting that these violations are considered war crimes according the article 147 of the 4th Geneva Convention for the protection of the civilians, and according to the 1st additional protocol of the convention to ensure the right of protection for Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories.