

Palestinian rights groups call for halt to Israeli military incursions into Gaza



An Israeli tank takes position at the Gaza Strip border. (Photo: AP)

Ramallah, November 13 (RHC)-- Palestinian human rights groups have called on the Israeli regime to cease its military incursions into the besieged Gaza Strip, demanding compensation for farmers for their agricultural losses.

In identical letters, the al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, Adalah -- the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel -- and Israeli human rights organization Gisha asked for an immediate halt to the Israeli military's destruction of farming lands in the Gaza Strip, an investigation into recent incursions, and indemnities for Gaza-based Palestinian farmers.

The letters were reportedly addressed to Israeli minister of military affairs Benny Gantz, Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit as well as the Military Advocate General Major General Sharon Afek.

“On October 13, 2020, Israeli military bulldozers crossed some 300 meters into the Gaza Strip, severely damaging dozens of dunums of agricultural land and destroying crops in addition to irrigation systems... This is the heaviest damage to Gaza farmlands by an Israeli military incursion since 2014,” the rights groups said.

They added: “The Gaza Ministry of Agriculture reported that sources of income for at least 10 farmers were harmed as a result of the Israeli incursion, and damage to agricultural lands and crops are estimated to stand at over \$32,000.”

On Tuesday, several Israeli tanks and bulldozers rolled into Palestinian farmlands east of Deir al-Balah city, located over 14 kilometers (8.7 miles) south of Gaza City, and leveled a vast area.

Palestinian news outlets said the Israeli tanks and bulldozers came from Kissufim military base, just close to the border fence with the Gaza Strip and east of Khan Younis, and advanced dozens of meters into the Palestinian territories.

The tanks fired several live and smoke shells during the invasion, while bulldozers flattened the ground and created sand barriers. Israeli surveillance drones flew overhead as well.

The Gaza Strip has been under an Israeli land, air and sea blockade since June 2007, after the Hamas resistance movement, which has vowed to resist Israeli occupation, won the elections and rose to power in the enclave.

Since imposing the siege, Israel has also waged three wholesale wars against Gaza, killing and wounding thousands of Palestinians in each. The crippling blockade has caused a sharp decline in the standard of living as well as unprecedented levels of unemployment and unrelenting poverty in the strip.

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