

Israel fires white phosphorus in Lebanon and Gaza

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New York, October 13 (RHC)-- Human Rights Watch has confirmed reports of Israel firing white phosphorus munitions during attacks on Gaza and along its border with Lebanon.

White phosphorus poses a high risk of excruciating burns and lifelong suffering, and its use as an incendiary weapon in civilian areas is a war crime. Israel denies using white phosphorus.

Israel previously used white phosphorus in attacks on the Gaza Strip, including in 2009.

White phosphorus is often colorless, white, or yellow and has a garlic-like odor. The toxic substance burns at temperatures high enough to melt metal.

White phosphorus munitions are extremely difficult to extinguish, continuing to flare until the phosphorous has been completely burned out or until it is no longer exposed to oxygen.

It can be deployed through artillery shells, bombs, rockets or grenades.

White phosphorus can burn the skin down to the bone and the chemicals can be absorbed by the body, causing dysfunction in multiple organs including the liver, kidneys and heart.

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