

The Uprising Enters its Second Year

While the Palestinian uprising continues to move forward, building the base for the Palestinian state, the Israeli government remains committed to its age-old formula for dealing with the Palestinian question, a policy which is tantamount to mass killing.



The Zionist occupation authorities began 1989 by imposing a two-day curfew in the occupied Gaza Strip, and by expelling 13 more Palestinians on charges of participating in leading the intifada. The 13 were among the 27 arrested in August, and served with deportation orders. Coming after the expulsion of three on December 14th, this brought to 49 the number of Palestinians expelled from their homeland in the first year of the uprising. A further two Palestinians were administratively expelled on February 13th, because they were found to lack Israeli-issued ID cards, despite having lived in the West Bank for 22 years.

On January 17th, Defense Minister Rabin announced that he had authorized broader use of plastic bullets which were introduced in August, and are acknowledged to be lethal even by Israeli sources that count 47 killed by such bullets as of January. Previously, plastic bullets were to be issued only to specially trained troops;

now any soldier can fire them at «violent demonstrations» - defined as three or more Palestinians - even if his life is not endangered. This means shooting at stonethrowers even as they are running away or otherwise after the act, and shooting at those erecting barricades and burning tires.

In the «war against stones» declared by Brigadier General Ramot, head of the Israeli civil administration in the Gaza Strip, the army is authorized to arrest and punish anyone over 12 years old for throwing stones; they will get prison terms of two-three years; their families' homes will be demolished or sealed; and their parents fined or threatened with closure of their shop or property confiscation.

LEGALIZING THE DEATH SQUADS

While this appears as a substantial tightening of Zionist repression, most of these measures have been in practice, to varying degrees, since the outbreak

of the intifada. Rabin simply legalized them. It is difficult to ascertain whether the occupation authorities really envision that this old-new policy can stop the uprising, or whether it is more designed to boost morale in the military establishment.

The Database Project on Palestinian Human Rights listed 43 Palestinian deaths as «under investigation or possible official responsibility,» in addition to the 432 known to have been shot, beaten, burned, stoned or teargassed to death by the occupation forces and their agents from December 9, 1987 to December 8, 1988. These undetermined cases, added to documented assassinations, point not only to the regular troops, but to special army and Shin Beit units, as well as settlers.

Curfews and massive raids on villages, towns and camps, especially on strike days, provide a cover for a range of brutal tactics, including the summary execution of Palestinian activists, rather than arresting them. From June, there were reports of vandalism, beatings and other terror acts by a unit calling itself the Black Scorpions, thought to be part of the elite paratrooper unit, the Golani Brigade. Soldiers of this unit, aside from imposing collective punishment on whole villages and camps, are known to have injected Palestinians with what they called a «truth serum» - inducing chemical poisoning in a number of the victims. The Black Scorpions target those who have spoken out against Israeli abuses, attempting to terrorize others into silence. For example, in Arura village where four Palestinians were buried to above their waists with stones on May 18th, the Black Scorpions later raided the home of one of them and beat him unconscious.

In October, Andrew Whitley of *Financial Times*, and Paul Taylor and Steve Weizman of *Reuters* were deprived of their press credentials by the Israeli government after writing that Israel was sending hit squads to the West Bank to assassinate Palestinian activists. Named was the Cherry Patrol which may be the new intelligence and