



مركز الميزان لحقوق الإنسان  
AL MEZAN CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



Adalah The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel  
عدالة المركز القانوني لحقوق الاقلية العربية في اسرائيل  
عدالة المركز המשפטי לזכויות המיעוט הערבי בישראל



Gisha - Legal Center for Freedom of Movement  
גישא - מרכז לשמירה על הזכות לנוע (ע"ר)  
مسلك - مركز للدفاع عن حرية الحركة

January 16, 2020

To  
Mr. Naftali Bennett,  
Minister of Defense  
By Fax No. 03-6976711

To  
Adv. Sharon Afek,  
Military Advocate General  
By Fax No. 03-5694526

To  
Dr. Avichai Mandelblit,  
Attorney General  
By Fax No. 02-6467001

Dear Sirs,

**- Extremely Urgent -**

**Re: Cessation of the current aerial spraying inside and near the Gaza Strip**

We hereby write to you with an urgent request to order the cessation of the aerial spraying being conducted within and near the Gaza Strip, which causes severe damage to crops and places the health of Gaza residents at risk, as follows:

1. On the morning of January 14, 2020, many farmers in Gaza were surprised to see Israeli aircrafts conducting aerial spraying. **The spraying continued yesterday and today for three to four hours each morning, raising serious concerns over possible severe damage to crops grown by Gaza farmers. There is also concern that spraying will continue over the coming days.**
2. We are in possession of photos and videos taken between January 14, 2020 and January 16, 2020, showing tires being burnt on the Israeli side for the purpose of discerning wind direction. It appears that the spraying was conducted when the wind was blowing toward the Gaza Strip, meaning that the harmful herbicides are carried into the Strip and into farmlands belonging to local residents. According to eyewitness accounts and reports, the spraying conducted has been massive in scope, uncontrolled, and no precautions were taken. This raises grave concerns over possible harm to crops inside the Gaza Strip, which are the source of livelihood for the affected farmers, in addition to the health risks resulting from exposure to the chemical agents used in the spraying.
3. We remind you that we have contacted you previously with respect to this matter, requesting, inter alia, that you halt all spraying causing severe damage to lands owned by farmers in the Gaza Strip. Nevertheless, and despite the fact that more than a year has

passed since the last spraying was conducted, aerial spraying has been renewed in recent days in a manner resulting in damage to crops near the border in Gaza.

*A copy of our letter dated December 4, 2018 and a copy of one of our eight letters dated June 27, 2016, are attached and marked A.*

4. Moreover, in July 2019, London-based research agency Forensic Architecture published an investigation by experts in the field who analyzed Israeli herbicide spraying along the Gaza perimeter fence between 2014 and 2018. The investigation examined the scale of the drift and the concentration of herbicides inside Gaza and confirmed high concentrations of herbicides had reached and damaged crops at a distance of 300 meters from the border inside the Strip. These concentrations were found to be above the recommended amount according to the European Union.
5. As stated, this investigation and its scientific findings lend support to the statements made in our letters, establishing that spraying has caused severe damage to land and crops within Gaza. The investigation states that spraying is **uncontrollable and that it results in unpredictable, disproportionate damage.**

The report is available at: <https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/herbicide-warfare-in-gaza>.

6. We again emphasize that aerial spraying constitutes a **destructive measure** that contravenes both Israeli and international law, as explained in detail in our previous complaints, and that the Israeli army has no legal authority to employ such practices. **Even if the spraying is conducted from within Israeli territory, the chemical agents used are carried into the Strip, causing severe damage to crops inside Gaza.**
7. In light of the aforesaid, we call on you to order to cease the spraying and refrain from any further spraying near the Gaza Strip which harms local farmers and puts their crops or their health at risk. **Inasmuch as the spraying does not cease immediately, we will be forced to seek an injunction from the High Court of Justice.**

We would be grateful for your prompt attention to this matter

Sincerely,

Muna Hadad, Adv.