

Arab Organization for Human Rights in UK
المنظمة العربية لحقوق الإنسان في بريطانيا

Special report about the killing of tunnel workers AOHR 7-1-2010



Away from eye witnesses

In the name of sovereignty, the Egyptian government sprays poisonous gas to hunt for and kill tunnel workers on the border with the Gaza Strip



Summary

Of the 265 kilometers, which is the length of the borders between Egypt and Palestine (1), the Egyptian government is taking strict measures along 10 km only, which is the length of borders between Egypt and the Gaza Strip, under the pretext of protecting Egyptian national security. They claim that the measures taken on the border are non-negotiable sovereignty measures. Meanwhile, throughout the remaining 255 km, Egypt cannot move a rock without taking permission from the Israeli government. In addition, it cannot practice that same policy at the Gaza Strip borders expect to implement practices approved by the Israeli government in order to confront African immigrants, about whom we'll mention later.

In the name of sovereignty, the government's policy at the borders was translated into a form of orders to the security personnel, to use all kinds of force with the Gaza Strip citizens, especially tunnel workers, who provide food and medicine, in light of the complete closure of borders and tightening of the blockade against Gaza Strip.

Egyptian security forces used deadly force in its "war" against tunnel workers between Gaza Strip and Egypt and carried out premeditated killing of people under ground, and away from the eyes of the world, and throughout research, 53 death cases have been document as having died due to inhaling a poisonous gas Egypt security forces sprays inside tunnels which causes suffocation and quick death. No one knows what this deadly weapon, used by the Egyptian security forces, is as there are no projectiles and there no laboratory testing, advanced enough, in Gaza Strip to find out what it is. Moreover, the Egyptian government used explosives, pumped waste water, and caused artificial vibration in order to destroy tunnels over the heads of people working in them, without a warning.

Egyptian practices caused the killing of a large number of workers inside the tunnels, intentionally, and against international law, in the name of Egyptian sovereignty. Sovereignty does not give government officials the right to use deadly means against others; but rather measures stipulated by international law are to be used in these cases.

The Egyptian practices at the borders with Gaza Strip are carried out under a complete supervision and support from U.S. and Israel, and most of the European Union Countries and this explains the Egyptian government's persistence in its measures and the absence of any criticism of such practices despite their gravity, as will be explained in detail in this report.

The Arab Organization for Human Rights in UK confirms that the Egyptian government, by using these measures, has turned its security forces into "deadly tools", in order to implement security measures that do not take into account the bases of international humanitarian law which would have serious legal and judicial implications against officials in the Egyptian government.

Introduction



Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and safety

Universal declaration of human rights article III

Stop spraying poisonous gas into tunnels

You're killing besieged people

Who are looking for a decent livelihood

When Israel withdrew from Gaza Strip, and dismantled its settlements, in August of 2005, it held out negotiations with the Egyptian side in order to amend some security understandings between the two sides at the borders, and they both reached certain security understandings in order to maintain security at the borders with Gaza Strip where Egyptian Authorities hired 750 member to maintain security of the area. The agreement set the kind of weapons allowed for use by these security members and they are light weapons and jeeps, where no heavy weapons are allowed and where area of patrol is 10 kilometers on land and 3 km deep in the water.

Egypt continued to complain that these numbers were not enough to maintain security in that area and demanded to raise the number to 1500-2100, but Israel refused claiming that it's not about numbers but rather about tunnel detecting equipment and pursuing smugglers.

Israeli pressure increased through U.S. Administration channels in order to get Egypt to carry out more practices to stop smuggling along the Israeli Egyptian borders. The Egyptian government defended itself saying it's carrying out its duties to the fullest and demonstrated that through showing that it destroyed a large number of tunnels between the years 2004-2007. See table below. (2)

Number of tunnels discovered by the Egyptian authorities according to the Egyptian defense ministry

2004	20 tunnels
2005	25
2006	73
2007	119

Israeli and U.S. efforts succeeded in pressuring the Egyptian government, where the Congress passed a law to withhold some of the U.S. aid to Egypt in 2007 and 2008 worth 100 million and 200million dollars respectively out of the military aid totaling 1.3 billion dollars until U.S. foreign minister proves to the Congress that the Egyptian government is taking measures to combat smuggling along the Egyptian Israeli borderline, especially with the Gaza Strip borders (10km). (3)

Security delegates to the borders with Gaza Strip:

In February 2008, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) released a report, in which it disclosed the secretive American Egyptian Israeli security cooperation to tighten the blockade against Gaza Strip. the document, which the Arab Organization for Human Rights in UK got a copy of, revealed that a high ranking U.S. delegate visited Cairo in November 2007 and recommended the building of a separating wall with a water canal and supports that go deep in the ground, which is currently being translated into the building of a steel wall at the borders with Gaza Strip.

In the details, The U.S. sent Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Robert Danin and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Mark Kimmitt to Egypt in November of 2007 to assess the problem of smuggling generally, and after visiting the border area, the two envoys recommended the following:

- 1- The U.S. is to provide Egypt with advanced instruments to detect tunnels and equipment to destroy them such as non-manned vehicles and sound sensors to enhance the Egyptian security ability to detect tunnels.
- 2- Egypt is to dig a water canal along the borders, which is an Israeli idea that was proposed two years prior to 2008.
- 3- Egypt, Israel, and the U.S. are to form a security committee to follow up on the smuggling action at the borders with Gaza Strip.
- 4- The building of a wall with supports that reach deep in the ground, with a water canal.
- 5- U.S., Egypt and Israel are to form a security committees that can handle all issues pertaining to the borders with Gaza-Egypt, including weapons smuggling, entrance of "terrorists" through the borders, and controlling the borders, which was an idea rejected by Israel. (5)

In order to follow up with these recommendations, a team from the engineering unit in the American army travelled to Egypt in December 2007 to assess the smuggling situation at the borders and equipment needed to detect tunnels. And in this regard, Secretary of state, then, Condoleezza Rice said the Egyptians need hi-tech equipment and we are going to provide them with them but they have to possess a true will for implementation. And on 16-6-2008, spokesman for the American embassy in Cairo, Robert Grenan said that the U.S. (ministry of Defense) started training Egyptian forces to use electronic equipment including sensors for detecting tunnels.

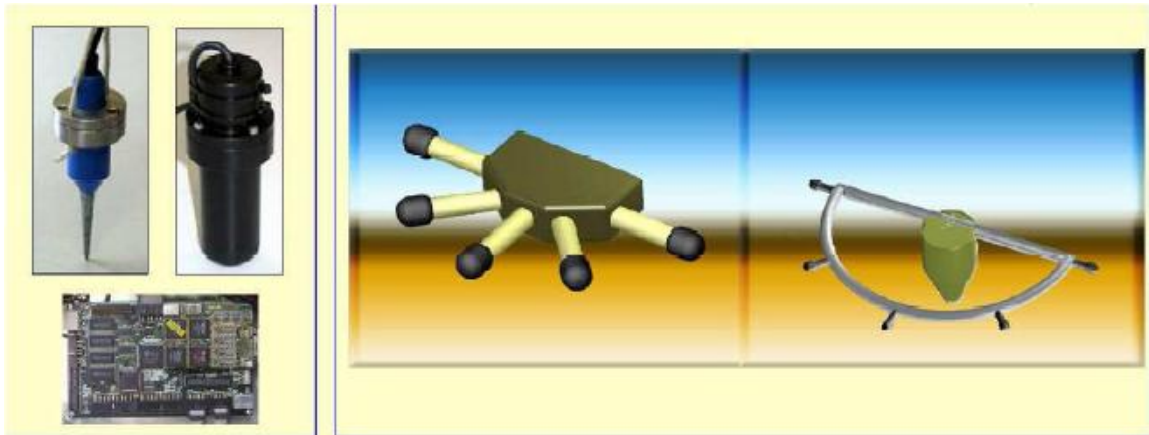
Also, Steve Israel, who works in the U.S administration, visited the Rafah area in January of 2008 and announced that through these equipments and trainers, tunnels will be closed and will be lifted from the negotiations table for ever.

Also a borders experts team from Germany visited the border area and offered to help in stopping smuggling.

In October of 2008, training courses for Egyptian officers were held to train them to use the new equipment. Officers in the Pentagon commended the skills of the Egyptian officers who trained to use these instruments.

In the beginning of 2009, required instruments arrived, (23 million dollars, which were to be deducted from the military aid provided to Egypt each year, were allocated for the purchase of tunnel detecting and destruction instruments) where the U.S. engineering unit installed the instruments and supervised those working with them. (Sonars, ground penetrating radars and surveillance cameras.) (6)

Sonar used to detect tunnels 50 meters deep



The active U.S. intervention at the end of 2008 was the result of the bilateral agreement signed between the U.S administration and Israel before the end of the Israeli war against Gaza Strip in mid of January 2009, which states that the U.S. provides regional security forces with equipment and technology and training on anti-smuggling tactics. The U.S. will also work in cooperation with its partners in the area, as well as NATO to deal with the problem of supplying weapons, equipment, consignments and shipments of weapons to Hamas and other groups in Gaza, including shipments that go through the Mediterranean, the Aden gulf, the red sea and east Africa, through bettering existing arrangements, or launching new initiatives that aim at increasing the effectiveness of existing arrangement and the parts that relate to smuggling weapons into Gaza. (7)

And in the beginning of 2009, (U.S) held activities to patrol the Mediterranean and the Red sea in order to stop smuggling into Gaza, and in February a conference was held in Denmark, for experts from Canada, the U.S., U.K., Norway, Holland, Germany, France, Spain, and Italy to discuss the prevention of smuggling into Gaza, where Israel attended the conference as an observer. Numerous other meetings followed in London and Germany which resulted in a British, French and German offer to Egypt and Israel to provide them with security and stop smuggling from the sea and on the borders. Today, NATO monitors Gaza Strip's coast as well as ports on the Red Sea in order to thwart any smuggling attempt.

Towards the end of the year 2009, the security movements at the borders with Gaza Strip was culminated through the disclosure of starting to build a steel wall with sensors to detect and destroy a network of tunnels intended for the transfer of goods to Gaza Strip. building the wall is supervised by French, American and Israeli officers, and the project is implemented through the Arab Contractors company (Osman Ahmed Osman), based in Egypt. The wall is supported by a pipeline from the coast of the Mediterranean, moving towards the east for ten km along the borders, to pump water in order to soften the soil, destroy existing tunnels, and prevent the digging of any other ones. and to

isolate Egyptian Rafah from Sinai, Egyptian Authorities are now building an electronic fence between Egyptian Rafah and Almasoura village, supplied with three security gates, to stop (allow) the transport of goods into Gaza. (8)

The nature of work at tunnels

Israel completely closed all crossings (to Gaza Strip), where goods allowed into Gaza Strip were very limited and did not meet the minimum required needs of people of the Strip. The Egyptian government also tightly closed the Rafah crossing, and prevented the movement of people and goods, except in exceptional cases. The Egyptian government requires that all goods be transferred through the Karm Abu Salem crossings, which is controlled by Israel. It should be noted that tons of humanitarian aid were stacked in Areesh and were left for theft and damage. According to statistics, the days the Rafah crossing opened from 1-1-2008 until 16-12-2008 are as follows: in one direction: 4 days, compared to 5 days in 2007. Partial opening: 98 days, for a few hours each day, compared to 50 in 2007. For humanitarian cases: 6 days; compared to none in 2007. And thus days of closure would be 244 days in 2008; compared to 310 days of closure for 2007. (9)

And in light of Egyptian practices of closing the Rafah borders and preventing movement according to international standards, Gaza Strip people had no other choice but to resort to the underground and establish a network of tunnels at the borders with Egypt in order to provide food, medicine and clothes, and not anything else. The falsity of the artificial noise can be summarized through statements of Deputy in the Knesset, and member of the defense and intelligence committees, Yitzhak Ben-Israel who considered Israel's worries of weapon smuggling tunnels from Egyptian Sinai desert to Gaza Strip, which is controlled by Islamic Resistance Group (Hamas), to be an exaggeration, where he said: "We tend to exaggerate substantially in the dangers of smuggling weapons from Egypt". He resumed regarding the weapons:" As far as we know, they got smuggled through the Sea and not the tunnels." He added that he does not agree with assessments that say the borders between Gaza and Egypt are the main problem in the region. (10)

The game of dying in the underground

The Israeli Egyptian understandings come out in the open gradually, in the form of steel walls, humiliations at the crossings on the ground, and killing and destroying tunnels underground, where in the past two years, actions at the Egyptian borders with Gaza Strip intensified, and the pace of information flow from the Egyptian side to the Israeli side, regarding the borders, increased, where the two sides started to cooperate with external security supervision, to tighten patrol along the borders.

Monitoring and following up with the actions of the Egyptian security forces these years, and their cooperation with foreign intelligence at the borders with Gaza Strip causes worry, in light of the absence of any supervisory authority, whether administrative, judiciary or media related. There has been a scary retaliation and hostile attitudes in the way Egyptian security forces deal with citizens of Gaza Strip in general, and tunnel workers, who provide food and medicine for Gaza Strip, in particular. There, underground, the joint forces play the “game of death” to hunt tunnel workers through the use of deadly force. Perhaps the testimony of survivors and victims’ family members the level of crimes committed and still committed in light of the lack of supervision.. and the Egyptian Judiciary system’s inability to deter those responsible or bring them to justice, in order to stop them from breaking the law.

The testimonies of survivors and victims’ family members are not the only evidence to the “bloody” low level which the Egyptian government reached in dealing with the issue of tunnels, but also statements of Egyptian officials who proudly and in broad daylight, talk about tightening the blockade through building the steel wall and destroying tunnels, in addition to special internal sources which revealed the magnitude and extent of the Egyptian government and its security forces involvement in the “systematic execution” of Palestinians trying to earn a living through underground tunnels, so that those tunnels become their final resting place. The Egyptian security institute turned its soldiers into “killing tools” through using deadly force against tunnel workers away from the eyes of the world, except for the eyes of the U.S. and Israel, which documents the littlest of matters through sound and picture in order to reassure the Israeli public that the Egyptian government is carrying out its duties towards Israel, and so many times, Israeli newspapers and TV stations had the precedence in broadcasting information about fighting and killing of tunnel workers by the Egyptian security forces, where the picture below titled “decent documentation”, and which aired on Israeli channel ten, shows Egyptian soldiers pumping poisonous gas, and on the phone a soldier saying “the guys suffocated... suffocated”.

Tracking workers inside tunnels

Egyptian security forces worked on hunting tunnel workers through various methods:

- 1- Spraying poisonous gas into tunnels.
- 2- Pumping sewage water into tunnels.
- 3- Activating a high frequency electric current in order to cause an electric lightning.
- 4- Causing artificial vibrations to destroy tunnels.

A field research conducted by the Arab organization for Human Rights in UK, showed that between the years of 2008 – 2009, the Egyptian authorities destroyed more than 127 tunnels, and more than 130 deaths were documented, due to different causes including falling into a tunnel, the collapse of part of tunnel, and Israeli war planes bombing, where these were the causes for 48% of these deaths, while 52% of the deaths are due to other deadly force used by the Egyptian authorities in the tunnels, including using poisonous gas, and bombing tunnels using a combination of explosives and poisonous gases. 36.20% died due to poisonous gas, while 14.90% died due to bombing of tunnels by the Egyptian forces. But workers at tunnels see things differently, where they consider “victims of work related accidents not to be more than 5%, while most of the victims fall as a result of the “Egyptian war” that targets the tunnels, whether by poisonous gas or explosives. (11)

Kind of poisonous gas

The most dangerous method used by the Egyptian government is spraying of poisonous gas, where medical sources in the Strip confirm that this gas is categorized as a chemical that can cause blood clotting, redness of the eyes, skin rash, and difficulty breathing. Another kind of gas was also used where it spreads in the form of clouds, and affects the nervous system loss of balance and suffocating. (12) Medical testimonies confirm that the gas used goes beyond being a tear gas, where spraying it in open space can cause death, while spraying it in closed spaces, such as tunnels, has a more serious effect and can be definitely be deadly, so using it in closed spaces is internationally prohibited. (13)

The lack of lab equipment in Gaza Strip made it difficult to determine the kind of gas sprayed into tunnels precisely, but what is confirmed is that the mentioned death cases were due to inhaling a poisonous gas inside tunnels, which leaked from the side controlled by the Egyptian government. This was confirmed by a statement for the group “families of tunnel victims” on 23-8-2009 where they said that the Egyptian security forces go after their relatives on the ground, and underground and that these forces humiliate people at the Rafah crossings, and sprays poisonous gas at tunnel workers. The group of tunnel victims’ families said in another statement: “ security forces practices against workers of the tunnels that connect Gaza Strip with Egypt were tightened recently through the spraying of poisonous gas inside tunnels, which causes people to suffocate and die instantly.” (14)

54 killings, that were systematically carried out by the Egyptian security forces which use deadly force in their war against tunnel workers, were documented. Egyptian security forces used the methods mentioned above which caused in most cases collective murder inside tunnels, 3-5 people at a time, where at time of bombing

tunnels, no one makes sure the tunnels are empty. In one of the infamous bombings, which was documented by a statement for the group “ Families of Tunnel Victims” on 24-9-2008, they said that Egyptian security forces bombed a tunnel that connects RAfah (south of Gaza Strip) with Egypt, and five people were killed in that tunnel and they are: Mustafa Saled Al-Najjar, Omar Fayiz Barghout, Ahmed Abdul Latif Al-Najjar, Khaled Al-Najjar and Riyadh Al-Aqad. The statement said that the tunnel collapsed due to Egyptian forces bombing of the tunnel at their end, knowing that it had people inside. The statement added: “It was hilarious that the Egyptian security forces started looking for the bodies after they bombed the tunnel, as if they had a burst of humane feelings all of a sudden”. The statement said that including these five victims, the toll of those killed inside tunnels rises to 45 since the beginning of 2008. (15)

The Egyptian forces also resorted to pumping sewage water inside tunnels and causing artificial vibrations, using heavy machinery, which led to the destruction of a large number of tunnels on top of those working in them, killing many of them.

Testimonies: (16)

“ why do they fight us?” asks one of the tunnel workers saying: I joined work in tunnels six months ago, with three of my brothers, and in most of the time I witnessed the fall of victims, it was caused by Egyptian bombing or spraying of poisonous gas... God be with us.. why do they fight us this way? What led us to this kind of work originally?! Let them open the borders so we can work in a normal and comfortable way. Do we like suffering and danger? But if there was no alternative, then dying in tunnels is more dignified than dying out of hunger or because medicine is not available.”

“we dig our own grave” Another worker adds: “digging tunnels is not an easy thing. Digging a tunnel that reaches from the Rafah borders into Al-Areesh, or even further, takes at least six months, and the digging process is most dangerous thing tunnel workers do... each time, we feel that we’re digging our own graves, but we have no other choice but to continue working”

A table showing some of the tunnel victims killed by the Egyptian Security Forces through spraying poisonous gas, electric lighting, or bombing tunnels: (17)

#	Name of deceased	Reason of death	Location of tunnel	date
1	Ashraf Mohamed Attaya	Inhaling poisonous gas inside tunnel	West Rafah crossing	20-3-2008
2	Emad Tawfiq Alashi	Inhaling poisonous gas inside tunnel	West Rafah crossing	20-3-2008
3	Mohamed Hamed Alremeli	Inhaling poisonous gas inside tunnel	West Rafah crossing	25-3-2008
4	Eyad Fat-hi Abu Ayash	Inhaling poisonous gas inside tunnel	West Rafah crossing	25-3-2008
5	Rami Hasan Al-sha'er	Inhaling poisonous gas inside tunnel	Salah Eldin Gate	5-5-2008
6	Mustafa Muhanna	Electric lightning	Brazil Neighborhood	30-6-2008
7	Ahmed Suleman Alakhras	Inhaling poisonous gas inside tunnel	Salam neighborhood – trans	01-08-2008
8	Suleman Nasralla Rashwan	Inhaling poisonous gas inside tunnel	Salam neighborhood – trans	01-08-2008
9	Muneer Fat-hi Rashwan	Inhaling poisonous gas inside tunnel	Salam neighborhood - trans	01-08-2008
10	Hamada Mohamed Fuja	Inhaling poisonous gas inside tunnel	Salam neighborhood - trans	01-08-2008
11	Taher Mohamed Dhair	Inhaling poisonous gas inside tunnel	Salam neighborhood - trans	01-08-2008
12	Saleh Yousef Khamis Jaber	Inhaling poisonous gas inside tunnel	Behind bahloul building	11-08-2008
13	Yousef Yousef Khames Jaber	Inhaling poisonous gas inside tunnel	Behind bahloul building	11-08-2008
14	Hosam Awadallah Kak	Inhaling poisonous gas inside tunnel	Behind bahloul building	11-08-2008
15	Abdul Naser Mohamed Saed Odwan	Inhaling poisonous gas inside tunnel	Salah Eldin gate	21-09-2008
16	Riyad Mohamed Alaqad	Bombing tunnel by Egyptian Authority + poisonous gas	Brazil neighborhood	23-09-2008
17	Khaled Ahmed Alnajjar	Bombing tunnel by Egyptian Authority + poisonous gas	Brazil neighborhood	23-09-2008
18	Omar Fayez Albarghut	Bombing tunnel by Egyptian Authority + poisonous gas	Brazil neighborhood	23-09-2008

19	Ahmed Abdul Latif Alnajjar	Bombing tunnel by Egyptian Authority + poisonous gas	Brazil neighborhood	23-09-2008
20	Mostafa Saleh Alnajjar	Bombing tunnel by Egyptian Authority + poisonous gas	Brazil neighborhood	23-09-2008
21	Ameen Abed Rabboh Kassab	Electric lightning	Qeshta neighborhood	21-05-2009
22	Ibrahim Ahmed Zorob	Electric lightning		13-06-2009
23	Ahmed Atef Zorob	Poisonous gas		25-06-2009
24	Hasan Khamees Khaleel Au Khadra	Electric lightning		29-07-2009
25	Ameed Omar Alhaloul	Electric lightning		29-07-2009
26	Mohamed Nabeel Madi	Electric lightning	Al-barahma	04-08-2009
27	Mostafa Safwat Salheya	Electric lightning		18-09-2009
28	Ahmed Sameer Ahmed Allouh	Tunnel collapse due to steel wall building	West of Rafah border	16-12-2009
29	Mahmoud Sameer Ahmed Allouh	Tunnel collapse due to steel wall building	West of Rafah border	16-12-2009
30	Fat-hi Ahmed Allouh	Tunnel collapse due to steel wall building	West of Rafah border	16-12-2009

A table for those killed due to artificial vibrations in the ground

31	Hilmi Mohamed Irbei	Tunnel collapsed due to vibration	Al-salam neighborhood next to Tranz	03-06-2008
32	Fadi Husein Khaleefa	Tunnel collapsed due to vibration	Al-Sha'oth	06-06-2008
33	Mohamed Tawfiq Abu Dan	Tunnel collapsed due to vibration	East of Rafah border	10-07-2008
34	Mohamed Fat-hi Abdul Ati	Tunnel collapsed due to vibration	East of Rafah border	10-07-2008
35	Ibrahim Sabri Mohamed Zorob	Tunnel collapsed due to vibration	Al-Sha'oth	18-09-2008
36	Ahmed Ghazi Abu Tailekh	Tunnel collapsed due to vibration	Al-Sha'oth	18-09-2008
37	Akram Kamel Madi	Tunnel collapsed due to vibration	Al-Sha'oth, next to Raba'a Al-Adaweya school	26-10-2008
38	Sameh Abu Srour	Tunnel collapsed due to vibration	Al-Sha'oth, next to Raba'a Al-Adaweya school	26-10-2008
39	Isam Alnajjar	Tunnel collapsed due to	Al-Sha'oth, next to	26-10-2008

		vibration	Raba'a Al-Adaweya school	
40	Mohamed Abdul Ghani Alnajjar	Tunnel collapsed due to vibration	Rafah	15-02-2008
41	Yousef Mohamed Sa'ed Shatta	Tunnel collapsed due to vibration	Rafah	18-02-2008
42	As'ad Faisal Mukhtar Alkilani	Tunnel collapsed due to vibration	West of Salah Eldin Gate	10-06-2009
43	Mohamed Mostafa Zorob	Tunnel collapsed due to vibration	Salah Eldin Gate	12-09-2008
44	Mohamed Mostafa alzareii	Tunnel collapsed due to vibration	Salah Eldin Gate	12-09-2008
45	Bassam Adel Altaweel	Tunnel collapsed due to vibration	Brazil neighborhood	25-09-2009
46	Ismael Salama Abu Jlaidan	Tunnel collapsed due to vibration	Salam neighborhood	30-09-2009

No sovereignty and no national security

While this small area of only 10 km, which is the borders between Gaza Strip and Egypt enjoys this great attention, the rest of the borders (255 km), do not get any Egyptian interest. See the map, where smuggling between Egypt and Israel, run by Israeli mafia, have been taking place for a long time, and since the signing of the Camp David agreement in 1979. These smuggling processes include humans, prostitutes and drugs. In winter of 1996, Israeli journalist, Uzi Mahanaimi, Sunday Times correspondent, revealed one of the largest drug smuggling operations through the Sinai into Egypt, back then the newspaper headlines were "Revealing the secrets of an Israeli plan that has succeeded in smuggling drugs to Egypt for decade". The operation was called the "Blade" and called for selling drugs for cheap, with priority given to the Sinai area and soldiers in the Egyptian armed forces. The "Blade" did not stop substantially and they continue in both directions, with Egypt incurring more loss, but Egypt is not doing anything in that large area of borders to stop this. Smuggling gangs in Sinai move Hashish, Cocaine (Bango), tobacco, and cigarettes across the borders to Israel and in return Israeli mafia gives them Heroin and counterfeit money as obligatory items to take back to Egypt.

Not only that, but camels were also trained to cross the borders, in order to empty their carriage and go back with a new carriage from Israel. One of the officials in the Sinai governorate confirms that drug smuggling from Israel to Sinai "is not regular smuggling operation for some money hungry individuals, but is rather a catastrophe and that Egyptian officials realize its magnitude and they try to control it quietly, without getting the media involved or getting into a security confrontation..." the spread of drugs in

Sinai and the high number of addicts are due to the low prices where young people can afford them, in light of the absence of an awareness plan or treatment for drug addicts. Residents of the areas say in criticism of the Egyptian government's silence: "We're surprised by the suspicious silence of the Egyptian officials towards this phenomena and we demand that they admit to the magnitude of the crisis and handle it the way they should." Statistics show that 5 kg of heroin are smuggled from Israel into Egypt and distributed daily.

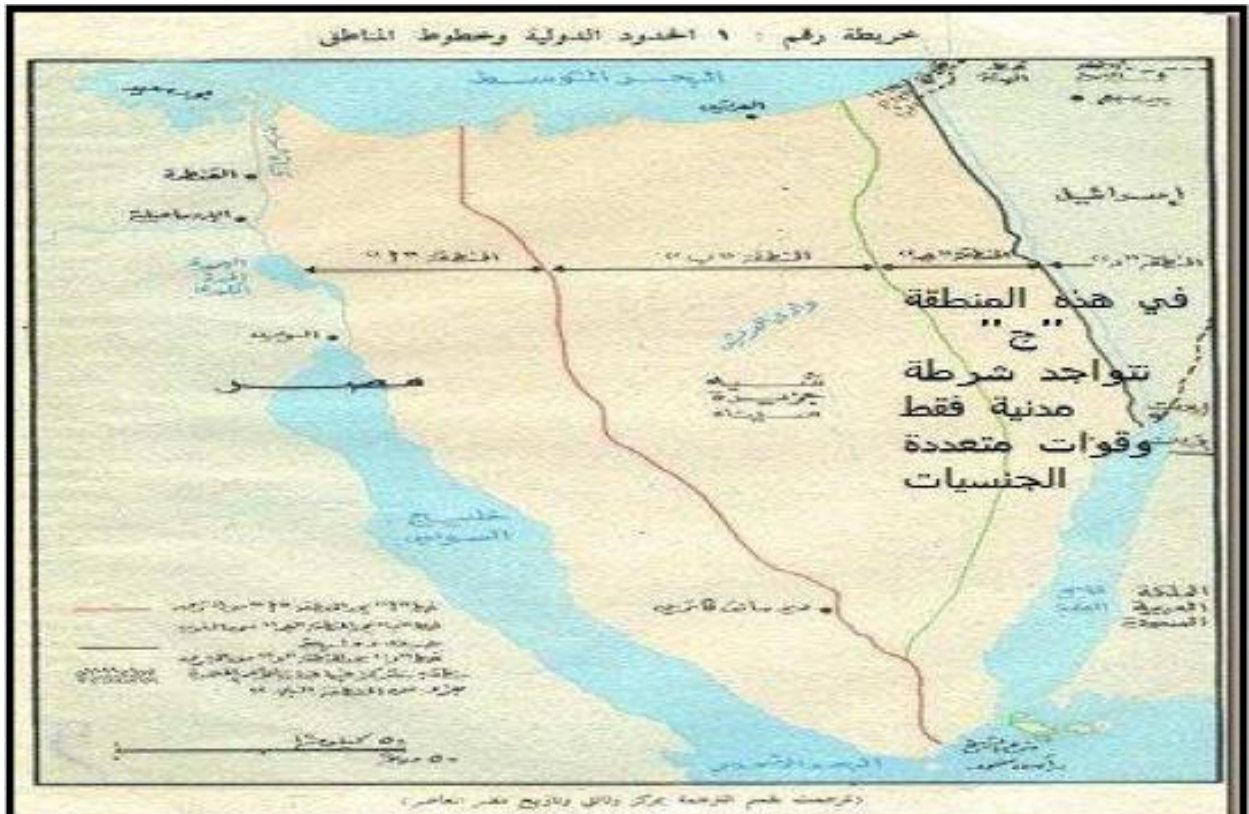
And moving towards Israel, and according to statistics made in 2002, 400 smuggling operations were run, where 3000 people were smuggled into Israel, mainly from East Europe, Ethiopia, and Sudan, as well as more than 50 tons of drugs (marijuana and Hashish) (19). And in a recent statistic published by Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper in 18-2-2008, it said that during the past five years, more than ten thousand persons were smuggled into Israel through the borders with Egypt, out of them close to 6000 cases between 2007-2008. These smuggling operations take place directly to Israel away from the borders with Gaza Strip, on ground, and underground.

These operations, even though dangerous, did not raise the same kind of interest that smuggling on the Gaza-Egypt border has. Despite of the threats of the Israeli mafia activities to Egypt's national security, Egyptians are forbidden to take any measures at these borders where they can't build walls or track tunnels. All they can do is, in case of finding some Israelis trying to sneak into Egypt, they return them back to Israel without taking any legal action against them. In the meantime, if Africans were seen trying to sneak into Israel, they get shot and killed.

Towards the end of June of 2007, Ehud Olmert met with Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, to discuss the issue of Africans sneaking into Israel as they pose a threat to the Israeli society structure, and after a short period of that meeting, Olmert announced that he had reached an "understanding" with president Mubarak on "ways of dealing with individuals trying to sneak into Israel through Egyptian borders". And indeed, Egyptian troops were freely shooting any dark skinned person trying to sneak to Israel where tens were killed and injured and statistics show that the number of those killed by Egyptian soldiers between July 2007 and September 2008, reached 38 people, in addition to tens others deeply wounded (20), and between May 2009 and September 2009, the number of those killed reached 13 cases. (21)

In light of these facts, we can clearly see that the deadly practices taken by the Egyptian government against Gaza Strip due to external efforts, and for internal political gains, have harmed 1.5 million people, and they taken hostages in order to blackmail them and get them to give up their right of resistance and of self determination.

Map: international borders Egypt – Israel according to the Camp David agreement 1979



Conclusions

- 1- The actions of the Egyptian security forces are a clear and systematic violation to the standards of international humanitarian law, which assert the right of life as one of the basic rights of humans, especially article IV of the International Covenant On Civil and Political Rights which stated that the right of life may not be derogated even in times of emergency which threaten the life of the nation. (22)

And in going back to the basic law (statute) of the International criminal court, we find out that the actions committed by the Egyptian security forces are crimes against humanity represented in the premeditated killing, where article VII of the statute states that “crimes against humanity 1- for the purpose of this statute, any of the following actions constitutes a crime against humanity, when knowingly committed as a large scale systematic attack , targeting any group of civilians: (a) premeditated killing (murder).

- 2- The Egyptian government cannot use sovereignty or national security as excuses to use harsh measures on its borders that get to the point of killing and starving an unarmed people living under blockade and occupation. The Universal Declaration of Human right, 1948, article III provided that “every person has the right of life, freedom, and personal safety.”
- 3- Those responsible for the mentioned murders have to be brought to justice in order to strengthen the rule of law and justice.
- 4- In case those responsible for crimes were not prosecuted, this will enhance a “situation of impunity” and will have severe consequences against the Egyptian government in international courts arena.
- 5- In order to eliminate the phenomena of smuggling at the borders with Gaza Strip, the Egyptian government has to open the Rafah crossings for the movement of people and goods, in accordance with the Arab League resolutions calling for lifting the siege on Gaza Strip and in accordance with the International Humanitarian Law which prohibits meddling with ways of livelihood of peoples and threatening their existence.

End

- 1- Public information <http://www.sis.gov.eg/Ar/Story.aspx?sid=2>
- 2- The Egypt-Gaza Border and its effect on Israeli-Egyptian relations, Jermy M. Sharp, CRS report for Congress. Order codeRL34346, February 1, 2008
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- 12- high ranking medical official in Gaza Strip
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