

DEAR SENATOR:

Israeli troops, wearing black ski masks and brandishing assault rifles, raided two Nablus hospitals on Oct. 25. At 3 a.m. soldiers cut phone lines and kicked open doors to make room-to-room searches at the Anglican Hospital. They removed the machines keeping alive one critically injured suspected militant and took him away.

Mark Turner, a peace activist from Boulder, CO, wounded during stone-throwing clashes, witnessed the raid on Rafidiyeh Hospital: "Around 3 a.m., I was woken up with a flashlight shining in my face. I opened my eyes and had an M-16 pointed in my face." Patients were told to put their hands in the air as a soldier filmed them, according to Turner.

Palestinian cabinet minister Saeb Erekat railed against the assault on hospitals. "This is the most flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, when hospitals are not safe anymore from Israeli atrocities."

Please withhold Israeli loan guarantees and freeze Israeli assets in America until Israel agrees to abide by international law and the road map to peace.

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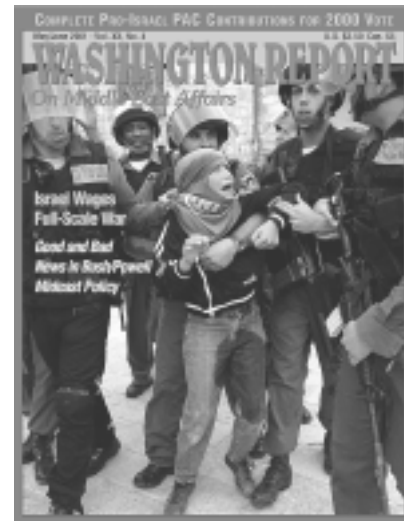
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"The wounded and sick, as well as the infirm, and expectant mothers, shall be the object of particular protection and respect."
—Geneva Convention, Article 16

According to the Geneva Convention, civilian hospitals are protected from military operations.

Physicians for Human Rights has accused the Israel Defense Forces of violating the 1949 Geneva Convention by entering Palestinian hospitals to look for insurgents. Since March 2002 there have been dozens of such instances, said Tomer Feffer, director of the local PHR-Israel branch.

On April 4, 2002, 25 IDF soldiers stormed the Red Crescent maternity hospital in El-Bireh and gathered all workers, women and newborn babies together. Some soldiers then photographed themselves with frightened patients and medical staff. The army removed Red Crescent emblems from seven workers and arrested five.

Since Sept. 28, 2000, the IDF has also attacked 259 ambulances in the occupied territories, killing seven medical workers.



AFP PHOTO/DANNY SALOMON/VEFIDOT AHRANOT

It came as no surprise that no photos were available of Israel's recent raids on Palestinian hospitals This photo shows an Israeli soldier interviewing Mahmud el-Gul at a Brasilia Hospital in the southern Israeli town of Ashkelon, after he was taken prisoner during a raid in Gaza City on June 27, 2003.

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