

**Judge Advocate General Headquarters
Office of the Commander**

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19 Adar 5769 15 March 2009

Ms. Jessica Montell
B'Tselem – The Israeli Information Center
for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories

Via Fax

Dear Madam,

Re: **Your letter to the Judge Advocate General regarding the use of the Ruger rifle**

Ref. Your letter of 26 February 2009

1. I was requested to respond to your aforementioned letter, in which you requested that the Judge Advocate General order IDF forces to cease using the Ruger rifle in handling public disturbances.
2. As is known, the IDF does not transmit information on the open-fire rules applying to its forces. However, I shall point out that the rules applying in Judea and Samaria to the use of combat means mentioned in your letter are extremely stringent, and are comparable, in general, to the open-fire rules applying to "ordinary" ammunition. Following your letter, we directed that the forces again be instructed with respect to the binding Open-Fire Regulations that apply to use of the Ruger rifle.
3. It should be emphasized that the IDF does not consider the Ruger rifle a means to disperse demonstrators or persons engaged in public disturbances, and that the weapon is not a substitute for using appropriate means to deal with public disturbances (such as stun grenades, rubber bullets, and so forth).
4. Regarding the contention arising from your letter, whereby IDF soldiers are almost never held accountable for their illegal use of weapons – this contention is false, it does not accurately reflect the situation, and we do not agree. Where a suspicion of illegal use of weapons arises, the suspicion is substantively examined. In appropriate cases, criminal and/or command-level measures are taken against those who acted unlawfully, based on the relevant circumstances.

Sincerely,

[signed]

Yehoshua Gortler, Major
Legal Assistant to the Judge Advocate General
on behalf of the Judge Advocate General

cc: Senior Deputy to the Attorney General, Attorney Raz Nizri
Head of Office, OC Central Command
IDF Spokesperson's Office – Head, Human Rights Section – Major Zohar Halevi