



**Palestine Football Association**

Jerusalem - Palestine

**الاتحاد الفلسطيني لكرة القدم**

القدس - فلسطين

## Media Statement

On the evening of March 30, the football teams of Balata and Jabal Al-Mukabber were playing the finals of the Yasser Arafat Cup at the Faisal Hussein International Stadium in Al Ram, Jerusalem. Around 2000 people were in the stadium including foreign diplomats, the president of the PFA, media and fans who came from Nablus, Ramallah and Jerusalem to watch the match.

Around 22:00 two armoured vehicles of the Israeli Occupation Forces arrived at the entrance of the PFA, on the sides of the stadium, and without any provocations started to shoot tear gas canisters and rubber encased metal bullets towards the field and the stands. Dozens of fans were affected, including children, with the match having to be suspended for an hour until the medics were able to treat the affected and clear the field of our main national stadium.

At the end of the match the Israeli force returned and resumed its tear gas barrage on the stadium, which affected the players, referees, and the PFA officials who had remained in the stadium.

Regretfully this is not the first time that Israeli Occupation Forces attack our sports or kill, injure and arrest our players. We have constantly denounced the attacks that our sportspeople and sports infrastructure continue to regularly suffer from the Israeli occupation. Our reporting to FIFA, the AFC, the other Confederations and other international organizations have shown in detail how the practice of sports continues being affected by the policies and practices of the Israeli occupation. To date there has not been a single act of accountability against Israel for conducting such attacks and how it affects the ability of Palestine fulfil its obligations as FIFA member to compete in both national and international competitions.





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We have also provided FIFA with detailed information about the football clubs in illegal colonial-settlements in the occupied territory of Palestine, which the Israeli illegally allows to play in its league and benefit from FIFA development funds in a blatant violation to FIFA's own statutes. Regrettably, FIFA took no action.

A similar situation has taken place with regards to the documented cases of racism that still exist in the context of Israeli football competitions and that remain being dealt with impunity

We denounce this culture of impunity as responsible for the repeated attacks against our sportspeople and sports facilities. While our stadium was attacked, Israeli settlers continued to enjoy the practice of football on stolen lands in the illegal colonial settlements nearby, including "Ma'ale Adumin" and "Pisgat Ze'ev", to name two of them. We have seen the international community taking action in other contexts, but when it comes to the Israeli occupation it remains an example of impunity in all levels, including FIFA statutes, the basic principles of the UN Charter as well as of the Olympic Charter.

It is because of the attacks that we continue to suffer that we reiterate our call for international protection and an end to the impunity granted for the commitment of such acts. Denying the Palestinian people the right to practice sports in safety is telling of the overall reality under Israeli occupation.

## Occupied Jerusalem

**April 4, 2023**

