Saleh Issa, a Palestinian 39 year old male with intellectual disability, was shot at a short distance with an illegal expanding life bullet “Dum-dum” on March 11th, by the Israeli Occupation Military Forces. Despite the difficulties and danger of the situation, the First Aid Crew managed to transfer him to Beit Jala Public Hospital, and the medical team decided to refer him to Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation (BASR) “Specialized Rehabilitation and Surgery Hospital“ seeking acute surgical intervention.

The medical team at BASR decided an urgent surgery to remove the bullet fragments from his leg. After the surgery, the doctor reported that “Saleh suffers destruction in his leg bones, skin and surrounding muscle tissue”. In addition, Saleh’s condition might require other surgeries in the coming days. The medical crew also expressed their concerns that they might be obliged to amputate part of his leg if his condition deteriorates. Saleh is still at BASR for further treatment and follow up.
The head of First Aid and Ambulance services at The Palestinian Medical Relief Society was an eyewitness to Saleh’s injury. He said that: “an Israeli Occupation soldier shot Saleh from a short distance, and had arrested him for a couple of hours earlier the same day, despite his knowledge that Saleh has an intellectual disability and was not a source of threat in any way to the Israeli armed forces”.

He also mentioned that “the first aid crew could not reach out to Saleh to give him the needed first aid and transfer him to hospital because the Israeli soldiers hysterically opened fire in the area, causing two casualties among the emergency teams and damages in the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) ambulances”. Later when Saleh’s situation became critical, the emergency team decided to take the risk to evacuate him from the street despite the heavy fire.

Saleh’s family confirmed that: “he was not involved in any kind of activity against the Israeli military forces when he was shot”. They added that “their son’s injury is another evidence for the Israeli assiduous violations of the human rights of Palestinian civilians whom they are supposed to protect under international law”. His family also expressed their concerns regarding his health especially that they know that their son might not be able to use both of his legs afterwards.

It is worth mentioning that this sort of human rights violation is not the first. Among so many other violations and assaults against persons with disabilities. Last week an Israeli Occupation soldiers attacked a child with hearing impairment in Husan; a village west of Bethlehem. According to eyewitnesses: “a military vehicle stopped beside the child, four heavily armed soldiers got out of it and mercilessly beat the child and left him with a broken arm, contusion in his face and body, injuries in his legs, and psychological trauma”.

The current complex situation in Palestine requires the international human rights organizations, governments and civil society’s immediate intervention to protect the Palestinian civilians, particularly vulnerable children and persons with disabilities.