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**Human rights situation in Palestine and other
occupied Arab territories**

Written statement* submitted by Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[27 January 2021]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT)

The Israel-Palestinian issue is one of the longest and saddest conflicts of the world. In spite of lengthy efforts to reach a solution, the conflict has been worsening due to reasons such as continuation of Israeli aggressive policies and the occupying power's failure to comply with international commitments. Reaching a solution to this crisis which continues to dwindle, requires the cooperation and accountability of members of the international community so that Israel is forced to comply with international commitments.

Necessity to resolve pre-existing issues

The Palestinian occupation crisis is still faced with issues which go back to the beginning of the occupation.

Refugees

Following Israel's declaration of independence and its subsequent occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip a large number of Palestinians became refugees. According to figures as of 2019, more than 5.6 million Palestinians were registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and nearly one-third of them, more than 1.5 million individuals, live in 58 recognized Palestine refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.¹

Israel continues to refuse to permit the return of millions of refugees to their homeland, citing them as a serious threat against.

Continuation of settlements construction and annexation of more lands from the occupied territories

In spite of international opposition towards illegal settlements construction and adoption of documents such as Security Council resolutions 465 and 2334², Israel continues to occupy further lands from the occupied territories and resettling of Israelis on these lands in order to change the population demographics of the region for its own benefit and expanding its territory.

According to recent reports, during the first nine months of 2019, Israeli authorities approved plans for 5,995 housing units in West Bank settlements, excluding East Jerusalem, as compared to 5,618 in all of 2018, according to the Israeli group Peace Now.³

Jerusalem

According to UN General Assembly resolution 181, the City of Jerusalem shall be established as a corpus separatum under a special international regime and shall be administered by the United Nations.⁴

Also, according to the General Assembly resolution A/RES/ES-10/L.22 any decision that results in changing of the identity, condition or population demographics of Jerusalem will be deemed as illegal and UN Member States must take action according to Security Council resolutions and refrain from opening diplomatic representations in the city.⁵

Nonetheless, annexation of parts of this city to Israel is continuing and the United States of America moved its Embassy to the City deeming it as a part of Israeli territory, the decision led to violent acts to be committed against Palestinians in 2018.

¹ www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/about_unrwa_two_pager_english_2020.pdf.

² S/RES/2334 (2016), S/RES/465 (1980).

³ www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/about_unrwa_two_pager_english_2020.pdf.

⁴ A/RES/181(II)(1947).

⁵ United Nations General Assembly resolution ES-10/L.22.

The continued and extensive violation of the rights of Palestinians

Since the onslaught of the occupation Israel has continually violated the fundamental rights of Palestinians.

Refusal to allow access to natural resources

According to UN Special Rapporteur Michael Lynk: “For nearly five million Palestinians living under occupation, the degradation of their water supply, the exploitation of their natural resources and the defacing of their environment, are symptomatic of the lack of any meaningful control they have over their daily lives.”⁶

Control of these resources and refusal of Palestinians’ access to them not only disrupts the daily lives and health of Palestinians but destroys their ability to self-determination. Exploitation of these resources ultimately results in Palestinians dependency, pouring of precious resources into Israel, addition of liquidity into Israel’s budget and Palestinians’ having to purchase their needed resources.

For example, the occupied West Bank is forbidden from utilizing Jordan River water and forced to purchase nearly a quarter of its own water from Israel.^{7, 8}

Use of administrative detention to jail individuals without charge or trial

For a long time now, Israeli authorities have used administrative detention to jail thousands of Palestinians in order to prevent access to justice to peaceful activists.

At the end of August 2020, there were 4,207 Palestinian security detainees and prisoners in Israel Prison Service (IPS) facilities, including 254 from the Gaza Strip. In addition, 575 Palestinians, 9 of them from the Gaza Strip, were in IPS prisons for being in Israel illegally. The IPS classifies these Palestinians – both detainees and prisoners – criminal offenders.⁹

Recommendations:

The promise of accountability – the mobilization of the collective will and effective countermeasures to defend justice – is at the heart of the international order.¹⁰

Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) calls upon the international community and international organizations not to support nor to be indifferent towards the self-interest policies of Israel and its allies who have ignored more than 150 UN Human Rights Council resolutions, 70 UN General Assembly resolutions, and 225 UN Security Council resolutions¹¹ in addition to contractual and customary commitments set in international law. The member states need to remain committed to their responsibility to confront the violator through application of proportional punishment and prevent further violations of the mentioned documents and articles.

ODVV calls upon the international community and international human rights and humanitarian law bodies not to remain silent and indifferent towards settlement building and make the occupying power accountable for its actions.

⁶ www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24349&LangID=E.

⁷ gulfnews.com/opinion/op-eds/water-crisis-is-poisoning-palestine-1.63626108.

⁸ A cluster of Palestinian villages in the south Hebron hills have had their newly laid water pipes, which had finally brought them clean running water, destroyed by the Israeli Civil Administration, forcing them to buy expensive trucked-in water for their homes and animals. See: www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-why-doesn-t-israel-want-palestinians-to-have-running-water-1.6959524.

⁹ www.btselem.org/statistics/detainees_and_prisoners.

¹⁰ Situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, A/74/507, 21 October 2019, p.10.

¹¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_United_Nations_resolutions_concerning_Israel.