

Item 7 – Human Rights Situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories

Joint Oral Intervention

Delivered by: Ms Nuriya Oswald, Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights

Date: 16 June 2020

Madam President,

The Gaza Strip has been under illegal Israeli closure since 2007, amounting to unlawful collective punishment of two million Palestinians, as recognized by the UN Secretary-General. This June, Palestinians mark 13 years since the start of the illegal closure, while no measures have been taken by the international community to put an end to this injustice.

As the world responds to COVID-19, Palestinians in Gaza are particularly susceptible to the pandemic in one of the world's most densely populated regions. Only 4 per cent of water is fit for human use and consumption, and sanitation services are limited, while Gaza's healthcare system was on the verge of collapse even before the pandemic.

The UN has repeatedly warned that Gaza would become uninhabitable by 2020 should Israel fail to lift the illegal closure. Today, half of Palestinians in Gaza live in poverty, 80 per cent depend on some form of humanitarian aid, 68 per cent are food insecure, and 69 per cent of the youth are unemployed.

Madam President,

In 2019, the UN Commission of Inquiry called on Israel, the occupying power, to “Lift the blockade on Gaza with immediate effect.” Member States of the Human Rights Council adopted this recommendation in accountability resolution 40/13; however, it remains unimplemented over a year later, while the root causes of the Great Return March have yet to be addressed.

We call on third States to live up to their responsibility to bring Israel's illegal closure of Gaza to an end and to uphold the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and return.

Thank you.

Signatories:

1. Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel
2. Addameer Prisoners Support and Human Rights Association
3. Agricultural Development Association (PARC)
4. Al Dameer Association for Human Rights

5. Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights
6. Al-Haq, Law in the Service of Man
7. Arab Network for Tolerance
8. Association des universitaires pour le respect du droit international en Palestine (AURDIP)
9. Association France Palestine Solidarité (AFPS)
10. Bait Almostuqbul Association
11. Baitona Association for Community and Development
12. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
13. Centre for Arab Unity Studies
14. Collectif Judéo Arabe et Citoyen pour la Palestine
15. Community Action Center – Al-Quds University
16. Defence for Children International – Palestine
17. Deir Al-Balah Rehabilitation Society
18. El-Wafa Charitable Society
19. Fares Al Arab for Development and Charity Works
20. Forsan Al-Ghad Youth Association
21. Fukhary Association for Rural Development
22. Gaza Action Ireland
23. Gaza Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture Platform (GUPAP)
24. Habitat International Coalition – Housing and Land Rights Network
25. Human Rights and Democracy Media Center – SHAMS
26. Just Peace Advocates
27. MA'AN Development Center
28. Medical Aid for Palestinians
29. MRAP (Mouvement contre le Racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples)
30. Nuseirat Rehabilitation and Social Training Association (NRSTA)
31. Palestinian Centre for Human Rights
32. Palestinian Lives Matter
33. Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO)
34. Peace Sport Club for Persons with Disability
35. Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies (RCHRS)
36. Thalassemia Patients' Friends Society – Palestine
37. The Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights – Hurriyat
38. The National Society for Rehabilitation
39. The Palestine Institute for Public Diplomacy (PIPD)
40. The Tunisian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel
41. Union Juive Française pour la Paix (UJFP)
42. Union of Health Care Committees
43. Wafaq Society for Women and Child Care
44. Youth Political Forum
45. Zakher Association to Develop the Capacity of Palestinian Women