



## مركز الميزان لحقوق الإنسان Al Mezan Center for Human Rights



42<sup>nd</sup> Regular Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

Joint Oral Intervention by

**Al-Haq – Law in the Service of Man, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, and Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, NGOs in Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council**

Item 2 - Oral Update by the High Commissioner on the Commission of Inquiry on Gaza

**General Debate**

11 September 2019

Thank you, Mr President, Madame High Commissioner,

We are seriously concerned as to the ongoing deterioration in the Gaza Strip as a result of 12 years of prolonged closure and blockade by Israel, the Occupying Power. We regret that the closure, which has made Gaza uninhabitable and amounts to unlawful collective punishment, was absent from the High Commissioner's update to the Council at the opening of the 42<sup>nd</sup> session, despite being a root cause of the Great Return March.

Palestinians in Gaza, including children, have continued to exercise their right of peaceful assembly since 30 March last year, protesting Israel's unlawful closure and calling for the realisation of their inalienable rights, including the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and property.

Your Excellencies,

Since 2012, the UN has repeatedly warned that Gaza will become uninhabitable by 2020. Today, Israel's 12-year closure has led to profound and unparalleled levels of aid-dependency, food insecurity, poverty, unemployment, widespread psychological trauma and desperation. Gaza's health sector is on the verge



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of collapse. Hospitals face shortages in medicines and are unable to treat the thousands of injuries from the demonstrations. As a result, Gaza has already become unliveable.

The Commission of Inquiry called on Israel to lift the Gaza blockade with immediate effect. We urge the Office of the High Commissioner to set a clear time frame for the implementation of the Commission's recommendations. Ultimately, we urge Member States to pursue international justice and accountability and to call for the opening of an ICC investigation into the situation in Palestine.

Thank you.