

Ms. Michelle Bachelet
High Commissioner for Human Rights
Palais Wilson – United Nations
Geneva, Switzerland
17 March 2020
Joint Civil Society Letter to the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Re: Welcoming the publication of the United Nations Database of Businesses Engaged in Activities Related to Israeli Settlements

Dear Madam High Commissioner,

The undersigned organizations commend you and your Office for the publication of the United Nations (UN) database of businesses engaged in activities related to Israeli settlements (database) in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), ahead of the 43rd Session of the Human Rights Council (HRC), almost four years since the establishment of the mandate. The database's release demonstrates the commitment of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to upholding human rights standards and the rule of law in pursuit of justice and accountability for oppressed persons, groups and peoples around the world, while reaffirming OHCHR's independence and impartiality in the face of undue political pressure. We reaffirm our continued support to the independent work of the OHCHR.

Our organizations welcome the release of the database, although not comprehensive in scope, as a critical first step toward the fulfilment of Human Rights Council resolution 31/36 (2016), which strongly indicates that the OHCHR will question the role of business enterprises within the context of rapid illegal settlement expansion. It also indicates that the OHCHR will question Israel's ongoing consolidation of its unlawful annexation of occupied East Jerusalem and de facto annexation of parts of the occupied West Bank in breach of international law and human rights standards. To this end, the database's release sets an important precedent by establishing a tangible mechanism strengthening the implementation of international law, particularly in relation to State obligations and the responsibility of businesses to respect international law and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), including in situations of conflict and occupation.

As our organizations strongly welcome the long overdue release of the database, we also reiterate the importance of fulfilling the mandate of HRC resolution 31/36 in its entirety; i.e., to ensure the annual update of the database within the framework of the OHCHR. The undersigned organizations are committed to supporting such annual updates through increased transparency and engagement from your office in order to ensure that the database is a living and public document, which serves as a platform for transparency and positively incentivizes corporations to end their activities and relationships with Israel's illegal settlement enterprise.

We look forward to continuing to work with the OHCHR, with a view toward ending corporate impunity for profiting from grave breaches of international law.

Sincerely,

1. 11.11.11
2. Addameer
3. Al Mezan
4. Al-Haq
5. Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (ARIJ)
6. Article 1 Collective
7. Association Belgo-Palestinienne WB
8. Association France Palestine Solidarité (AFPS)
9. Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)
10. AssoPacePalestina
11. BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights
12. Belady Organization for Human Rights
13. Broederlijk Delen
14. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
15. Center for Constitutional Rights
16. Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights "Hurriyat"
17. Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)
18. Civic Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem (CCPRJ)
19. CNCD - 11.11.11
20. Collectif Judéo Arabe et Citoyen pour la Palestine (CJACP)
21. Community Action Center - Al Quds University
22. Conectas Direitos Humanos
23. Dawlaty
24. De-Colonizer
25. Defender Center for Human Rights
26. EMCEMO
27. Euromed Rights
28. Gate 48
29. Gibanje za pravice Palestinecev, Slovenia
30. Gulf Centre for Human Rights
31. Housing and Land Rights Network - Habitat International Coalition
32. Human Rights and Democracy Media Center (SHAMS)
33. Human Rights Initiative Women in Black (Vienna), Austria
34. International Accountability Project
35. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
36. International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
37. Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign
38. Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center
39. Jewish Voice for Peace
40. Jurists Without Chains
41. Libyan Center for Freedom of the Press
42. MIR-France, in English : IFOR (International Fellowship of Reconciliation)-France

43. Movement against Racism and for Friendship between Peoples (MRAP)
44. Mwatana for Human Rights
45. Nederlands Palestina Komitee
46. Norwegian People's Aid
47. One Justice for Human Rights
48. Oxfam
49. Palestina Solidariteit vzw (Belgium)
50. Palestine Link
51. Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR)
52. Palestinian Counseling Centre (PCC)
53. Palestinian Human Rights Organisations Council (PHROC)
54. Palestinian Non-Governmental Organisations Network (PNGO)
55. PAX
56. Pax Christi Vlaanderen
57. Plateforme des ONG françaises pour la Palestine
58. Première Urgence Internationale
59. Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies (RCHRS)
60. SolSoc
61. Syrian Center for Legal Studies and Researches
62. Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression
63. Syrian Network for Human Rights
64. Syrians for Truth and Justice-STJ
65. The Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO)
66. The European Trade Union Network for Justice in Palestine
67. The Land Defense Coalition & The Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Campaign (Stop the Wall)
68. The Libyan Network for Legal Aid
69. The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH)
70. The Rights Forum
71. Tiye International
72. Trócaire
73. Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC)
74. US Campaign for Palestinian Rights
75. Vrede vzw, Belgium
76. Women Defenders Network
77. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
78. Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC)