



43nd Regular Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council
24 February – 20 March 2020

Oral Intervention

Al-Haq, Law in the Service of Man

Item 2 – Interactive dialogue on the report of the High Commissioner on recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry on the protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (Human Rights Council Resolution 40/13)

Date: 26 February 2020

Speaker: Mr Wesam Ahmad, Al-Haq

Thank you, Madam President, Madam High Commissioner,

Let me begin by commending the Office on the release of the database on business involvement in Israel's illegal settlement enterprise, as an important step towards corporate accountability.

Of course, the reality is that corporate activity does not occur in a vacuum, and in the context of Palestine, corporate activity is very much linked to Israel's colonial practices in denying the Palestinian people their right to self-determination, including permanent sovereignty over natural resources, which constitute the root cause of past and ongoing protests.

Your Excellencies,

The Commission of Inquiry is only one in a long line of investigatory mechanisms dispatched by this Office, which have yet to yield tangible results in the pursuit of justice and accountability. Despite the now ten UN commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions created on Palestine over the past two decades, no recommendations have ever been implemented. Yet, this same number of mechanisms has been used to criticize this body as being disproportionately focused on Israeli practices, while ignoring other violations around the world.

Such criticism, however, underestimates the intelligence of members of the Council and civil society, as being unable to distinguish between quantitative and qualitative measures, while at the same time expecting us to see the operations of this organ in isolation from the rest of the UN system.

It is this failure of States to act outside of the Human Rights Council system, including to adopt sanctions, that leads to our continued engagement therein. Until the international community takes steps towards meaningful accountability outside of this system, Israel deserves all the attention it gets within it.

Thank you.