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Joint Oral Intervention

Al-Haq, Law in the Service of Man
ADDAMEER Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies

Item 3: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

Date: 28 February 2020

Speaker: Ms Nada Awad, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)

Madam President,

We welcome the report of the Special Rapporteur and its focus on psychological torture. Despite its absolute prohibition under international law, torture remains widespread and systematic in Israeli occupation prisons and interrogation centres.

In 2019, Israel's Security Agency subjected Palestinian detainees at al-Mascobiyya Interrogation Centre in Jerusalem to severe physical and psychological torture and ill-treatment. The victims, including students, human rights defenders, and political leaders, suffered harsh beatings, sleep deprivation, solitary confinement, stress positions, sexual harassment, and the pulling of facial and body hair, and were denied access to sanitary facilities. They were also subjected to intensive psychological torture, including threats to harm family members and other detainees.

Your Excellency,

When 23-year-old Palestinian student Mais Abu Gush informed the judge of the torture and dire conditions she experienced in detention, instead of receiving any redress, her statement was heavily redacted in the Israeli court hearing's protocol. Her 17-year-old brother, Sulieman, was then also arrested and placed under administrative detention.

The torture inflicted upon Palestinians is sanctioned under Israeli law. In 1999, the Israeli High Court legitimised the use of torture in so-called "ticking bomb" scenarios, in breach of the absolute prohibition. As such, Israeli courts continue to sanction rather than prosecute the use of torture against Palestinian detainees. Israeli interrogators, doctors, and judges are complicit in masking the use of torture in Israeli detention.

We urge Member States and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to address Israel's widespread and systematic use of torture and ill-treatment against Palestinian detainees, to ensure prompt, independent, and transparent investigations, and to hold perpetrators accountable.

Thank you.