

Item 7 – Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories

Joint Oral Intervention

Date: 18 March 2021

Speaker: Mr. Samir Zaqout, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights

Madam President,

We issue this statement in light of Israel's continued widespread and systematic violations against Palestinians, some of which clearly amount to international crimes, and the international community's continued inaction, including to address Israel's pervasive impunity.

For over 13 years, Israel has maintained an illegal and unilateral closure over the occupied Gaza Strip, amounting to unlawful collective punishment of two million Palestinians. The closure has undermined all aspects of life in Gaza, denying Palestinians the enjoyment of their fundamental rights and freedoms, and affected all basic services, including healthcare.

While Israel is leading the global vaccine roll-out per capita, as an Occupying Power, it is failing to meet its legal obligations to supply vaccines to the entire occupied Palestinian population in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Accordingly, we call on the Council and UN Member States to:

- To support international accountability mechanisms, namely the international law- and fact-based HRC resolutions concerning the rights of Palestinians, and support the investigation by the International Criminal Court into suspected war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Palestine, including the crime of apartheid;
- To ensure equal and non-discriminatory access to COVID-19 vaccines for the entire occupied Palestinian population;
- To call on Israel to fully, immediately, and unconditionally lift the illegal closure of the Gaza Strip, and to address the root causes of all collective punishment and apartheid practices against Palestinians.

Thank you.

Joining organisations:

1. Al Mezan Center for Human Rights
2. Al-Haq, Law in the Service of Man
3. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies