

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food

Joint Oral Intervention

Speaker: Ms. Giulia Marini, Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights

Date: 26 February 2021

Special Rapporteur Fakhri,

We welcome your report and draw your attention to the situation of food insecurity in the Gaza Strip, occupied Palestine, where Israel's illegal closure, military occupation, and apartheid system have prevented two million Palestinians from enjoying their right to food.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, over 68 per cent of Palestinians in Gaza were food insecure, and more than half of the Gaza population was living below the poverty line. This data, already alarming in itself, is expected to worsen due to the pandemic, as Israel continues to implement its unlawful policies amounting to collective punishment of the Palestinians.

In August and September 2020, when the most stringent containment measures were in place, Palestinian farmers in Gaza, already vulnerable due to Israel's restrictions, were left unable to secure fertilizer or seeds, thereby compromising their ability to grow food and earn a living.

Food security is further compounded by Israel's continuous attacks against Palestinian fishers and farmers in the so-called buffer zone. Israeli attacks include the use of lethal or other excessive force, and the destruction of crops and fishing and farming equipment. Notably, the attacks did not stop in the wake of a global pandemic; on the contrary, Al Mezan's documentation shows that 2020 witnessed an increase in Israeli attacks compared to the previous two years.

We therefore invite Special Rapporteur Fakhri to investigate this issue and urge this Council and its Member States to promote Palestinian rights, including their right to food, while recognising and addressing the root causes of the escalating food crisis in the Gaza Strip, occupied Palestine.

Thank you.

Joining organisations:

1. Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association
2. Al Mezan Center for Human Rights
3. Al-Haq, Law in the Service of Man
4. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
5. Habitat International Coalition
6. Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling